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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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EDITORIAL BOARD: Axel Vopnfjord, Chairman of the Board and the Magazine Committee, 1267 Dominion St.; Mrs. Helen Sigurdson, Secretary, 104 Home St.; Judge W. J. Lindal, 788 Wolseley Ave; Halldor J. Stefansson, 296 Baltimore Road; Jon K. Laxdal, 39 Home St.; Dr. Áskell Löve, 4-636 Gertrude Ave.; Dr. I. Gilbert Arnason, 416 Waverley St.

NEWS EDITORS: Miss Stefania Eydal, Ste 19, Vinborg Apts.; Miss Mattie Hall-dorson, 213 Ruby St.; Arthur M. Reykdal, 979 Ingersoll St.

LEIF EIRIKSSON

CLUB: David Swainson, 471 Home St.

BUSINESS & CIRCULATION

MANAGER: Hjalmur F. Danielson, 869 Garfield St.

Editorial and news correspondence should be addressed to the Chairman of the Board or to the Editor concerned; subscription and business correspondence to the Business and Circulation Manager.

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Representative in Iceland — Frú Ólöf Sigurðardóttir, 26 C.Vesturgötu, Reykjavik

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CHRISTMAS

In one of his poems Tennyson says:

"The time draws near the birth of Christ,
The moon is hid, the night is still,
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist".

The world unfortunately has too many mists that tend to obscure the essential goodness and kindness of the human heart and the basic soundness of human nature.

A friend of ours, somewhat of a philosopher, calls the daily papers "daily saddeners". He selects certain sections to read, and omits the rest, because, he maintains, they are full of reports of crime and cruelty, greed and graft, selfishness, seaminess, suffering and sorrow. He says that otherwise he may adopt the attitude of the gentle, sensitive Roman poet, Virgil, about whom Tennyson says, "Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of humankind."

Once every year through the dark, silent mists of these negative, destructive forces ring the joyous bells of Christmastide, and the bright, penetrating light of good will disperses the mists. Humanity seems transformed. "Gone are the sorrows, gone doubts and fears". Smiles replace frowns. Friendliness takes the place of enmity and hatred. The miracle of Christmas began with a message which the world will long remember with reverence and gratitude.

Shepherds long ago heard the first Christmas message as they watched over their flocks one winter's night under the starlit sky of a far eastern country. They were huddled together for warmth, for even in a Mediterranean country the nights can get cold. They were unhappy, for what had they to be happy about during their

long, lonely vigil? A proud, haughty nation ruled over their land, a people that did not understand them and despised the customs and the religion of their fathers. In nearby Bethlehem people from the far corners of the country were gathered together to pay tribute to a far-off, tyrannical Caesar. In the moonlight they could discern roads, winding over the distant hills. They knew that these roads were bandit-infested, and death lurked in the shadows. Far away, dimly outlined against the skyline, could be seen the holy city of Jerusalem. There, money-changers daily desecrated the Temple of Solomon. There were rumors of wars, cold and hot. Life seemed to them to be like "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." "Then suddenly there appeared before them a heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men". Instantly their hearts became transfused with a transcendent joy. They caught "the vision of the world and the wonder that would be". In place of strife and war, **Peace**, and instead of enmity and hatred, **good will**.

Across the dark abyss of time which separates that far-off era from ours echo and re-echo the ringing and challenging tones of that first Christmas message: "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Christmas! A beacon light, shining brightly across the dark and troubled waters of human relations, beckoning, summoning mankind to sanity and to good will.

May the spirit of Christmas abide with us throughout the coming year, bringing in its wake the incredible joy which is ours for the asking.

Re-Orientation of Policy

In conformity with stated policy "to provide an instrument by which the children of ever increasing mixed marriages may be reached, and through which we would seek to instil in them a better knowledge and a keener appreciation of our heritage¹", the Icelandic Canadian has always endeavored to reach out to a widely dispersed reading public. To a degree it is desirable that its influence should continue to emanate from its focal point to the outermost periphery of its sphere of contact.

Since the magazine is published in Winnipeg, and its editorial board consists entirely of local residents, it is likely that a large proportion of the articles will be written by people of this area, and, since Winnipeg and its vicinity contain a larger number of people of Icelandic descent than any other community in North America, it is inevitable that its columns will always display a strong tinge of local color. Carried to extremes, this trend would destroy the efficacy of the magazine to reach its recorded objectives. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. To fulfil its duties the Magazine Committee must create a condition whereby the

strengthening influences of its periphery contacts radiate increasingly inward towards the focal point. That is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

In an endeavor to accelerate this trend, we are featuring in this, our Christmas issue, the region where the re-echoing sound of the Pacific, like a Lorelei, is attracting more and more people to its balmy, ever-producing shores. Associated with the Pacific North-West are three articles: Dr. Richard Beck pays tribute to the Sweet Singer of the Evergreen Playground, Jakobina Johnson; Sigríð Vopnfórd describes that picturesque, "orphan" peninsula, Point Roberts; Rev. Albert Kristjánsson, a well-known and greatly beloved former resident of Manitoba where he was for many years minister and a M.L.A. for St. George, writes about "Stafholt", the beautiful Old Folk's Home in Blaine; and Guðny M. Thorvaldson portrays the activities of the Icelandic Community in that fabulous city, Los Angeles.

We had hoped that some contribution would be forthcoming from Vancouver and Seattle. Perhaps, our hopes will be realized in the not distant future.

¹ Icel. Can., Vol. 1, No. 2 Dec., 1942, P. 16.



THE FRONT COVER

The selection of Jakobina Johnson's translation of the last verse of Guttormur J. Guttormsson's beautiful lyric poem "Góða Nótt" (Good Night) as our front cover poem is timely and appropriate for a variety of reasons; the poet and the translator are both

well known literary figures and their productions are widely read; Jakobina Johnson and the Pacific North-West are featured in this issue; the sentiments expressed in the verse are in close conformity with the spirit of Christmas. The poem and the transla-

tion appeared in a previous issue of the Icelandic Canadian². The original would, nevertheless, bear repetition:

“Streyms þú, himins stilling niður,
stattu við, þú nætur friður,
Hugur fellur fram og biður,
funheitt andvarp lyftist hljótt;

Hætti allra sár að sviða,
sólar verði gott að bíða,
þurfi enginn kulda að kvíða,
komi sólskin. Góða nótt.
Enginn þurfi að óttast, komi
Engill dagsins. Góða nótt!

2 Icel. Can., Vol. 3, No. 4, June, 1945, P.13.

★ ★ ★

IN THE EDITOR'S CONFIDENCE

In pursuance of the policy previously stated, the Editorial Board hopes to feature in our next issue the Icelandic communities along the Atlantic seaboard from Labrador to Florida, and westward to the Great Lakes in the north and to the Mississippi in the south. We solicit the co-operation of prospective contributors living in this area. Articles intended for publication should be in the hands of the Chairman of the Board on or before March 1st, 1954.

We expect to be able to publish in our next issue the adventures of our globe-trotting nurse, a former Selkirk resident, Miss Dolores Randall, one of our younger generation who speaks Icelandic fluently.

We welcome David Swainson, the representative of the Leif Eiriksson Club on the Magazine Committee, and join with him in pointing out to members of that club that contributions are welcome whether in poetry or prose.

A. V.

*Merry
Christmas*

PROFESSOR RICHARD BECK:

JAKOBINA JOHNSON

Lyric Poet and Translator

An Address delivered at a Special Meeting of the Leif Eiriksson Club, Winnipeg, October 23, '53



When I accepted your kind invitation to give the address on this special program, honoring the poetess, Jakobina Johnson, on the eve of her 70th birthday anniversary, there came to my mind the following verse lines by the Icelandic poet, Þorsteinn Erlingsson:

"Ef æskan vill rjetta þér örvandi hönd,
þá ertu á framtíðar vegi."

These verse lines, well-known to all who are familiar with Icelandic poetry and much quoted, may be rendered into English prose as follows: "If youth is willing to extend to you an encouraging hand, you are still in league with the future." Obviously, a challenging truth is here simply but forcefully stated, and I am, of course,

primarily thinking of its application to the gifted and gracious lady whom we are deservedly, if only *in absentia*, honoring this evening.

It is, indeed, a beautiful thing on the part of our young people to honor one of the older generation in such fashion; it is also a very intelligent thing to do, showing a recognition of the fundamental fact that we do not live in a vacuum, culturally and historically speaking, but that we are a link in the chain of the generations, heirs and debtors of those who went before us, sharers in their achievements; in our case, this applies in a special sense to our Icelandic cultural heritage, for, as has been truly said, we are old when we are born, whether we are fully aware of that fact or not.

I congratulate you, young people, heartily on having sponsored this program, and I am delighted to have a part in it, for another compelling reason; namely, because I am absolutely certain, as are all of us present here and many others, that we are this evening rewarding genuine merit, recognizing on the part of Mrs. Johnson an achievement of an enduring value, as well as something far above the ordinary. Permit me also to add this wish: "May it never be said of our Icelandic racial group on this continent that we mistake superficial and ephemeral success for real and lasting contribution in any field, mere glittering fool's gold, as it were, for the pure and noble metal itself." Having got that general

observation off my chest, I shall go on to the pleasant task at hand.

There is an Icelandic saying which runs like this: "Eplið fellur sjaldan langt frá eikinni" (The apple seldom falls far from the tree). As all proverbs, this saying is nothing but the distilled observation and experience of the race, having taken on, as is common with proverbs, a symbolic meaning, referring in this case to family or racial inheritance.

This time-honored saying of her Icelandic forbears applies particularly to Jakobina Johnson. Not only does she share in an uncommon measure, the rich Icelandic literary tradition and literary interest, but the blood of poets also flows in her veins.

She was born on October 24, 1883, on the farm of Hólmavað in Suður-Þingeyjarsýsla in northern Iceland, a district noted for its varied scenic beauty and no less for its unusual cultural and literary activity, with the result that from this remarkable rural locality, besides our absent guest of honor, have come a number of nationally known Icelandic poets and cultural leaders.

Jakobina Johnson's parents were Sigurbjörn Jóhannsson, a well-known poet in his day, and his wife María Jónsdóttir. The family emigrated to Canada in 1889 and settled in the Glenboro district in Argyle, Manitoba, where the future poetess grew up and received her early schooling. The settlement soon became a flourishing community, which has produced some of the most notable figures in Icelandic-Canadian cultural life, and, in a broader sense, in the life of our Icelandic ethnic group on the American continent.

Sigurbjörn Jóhannsson, Jakobina

Johnson's father, who died in 1903, was already a man of fifty when he left his native Iceland, where he had won a wide reputation as a poet, not least for his ready versemaking ability. He was a notable example of that significant and admirable class of people, the Icelandic unschooled poets (*alþýðuskáld*), and he wrote both some beautiful verses of a general nature and others in an effective humorous vein. Characteristically, his quatrains are often among his best efforts. An extensive selection from his poems (*Ljóðmæli*) was published in 1902, and while many of these were written in Iceland, other poems and epigrams of his deal with pioneer life in Manitoba.

Jakobina Johnson, therefore, grew up in a cultural and literary home atmosphere, where Icelandic literature, the nation's noblest legacy and its source of strength and inspiration for centuries, had a high place of honor. The lasting influence from that stimulating environment during her formative years can also easily be traced, directly and indirectly, in Mrs. Johnson's poems. Recognizing her inestimable debt to her parental home, she has, with deep filial devotion, dedicated her collection of poems *Kertaljós* (Candle Lights) to her parents.

After graduating from the Winnipeg Normal School, she was for some time a public-school teacher in Manitoba. Shortly after her marriage to Ísak Jónsson, brother of the well-known poets and editors, Gísli Jónsson and Einar P. Jónsson, she moved to Seattle, Washington, where she has since resided. Her husband, a successful architect and contractor, died in 1949. A man of cultural interests, he was

deeply appreciative of his gifted wife's literary activities, and in deservedly honoring her, we also remember him gratefully on this occasion. Nor would she wish to have it otherwise.

In an excellent article on her esteemed friend and fellow Icelandic poet, Stephan G. Stephansson, which Mrs. Johnson wrote back in 1924 for the Grand Forks, North Dakota, monthly *Scandinavia*, she said:

"How striking that Icelandic characteristic, — not to rest content with the mere routine of the material side of life, but ever reach out for spiritual attainment, in spite of exacting outward conditions. Stephansson is the most striking example conceivable, of this power; living an intensely intellectual life and creating abundantly, besides filling, as well as another, the place of the pioneer farmer and provider for a large family."

This is both well said and entirely true of the great poet, but the statement also applies in a striking fashion to Mrs. Johnson herself. The mother of seven children, with the resultant heavy and demanding household duties, she has, nevertheless, always reached out for spiritual attainment", constantly and assiduously cultivated her native literary talent. She has found time for much writing, has been active in numerous cultural and literary societies, and has lectured extensively on Iceland and Icelandic literature and culture. In all of which, as already indicated, she had the wholehearted encouragement of her husband. Their beautiful home was and still is a cultural center, and we who have been privileged to visit there can attest to the abundant traditional Icelandic hospitality which reigns within its walls.

In 1935 Mrs. Johnson visited Iceland as the special guest of the Young People's League and other groups, travelled extensively through the country, visited her childhood home, and everywhere received a most warm welcome. As might be expected, the visit inspired her to write a number of beautiful poems on her impressions and her reactions to the land of her birth. She was given an equally warm welcome when she made a second visit to her native land in 1948. Mrs. Johnson has, of course, been the recipient of many honors in recognition of her literary work, including the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon from the Icelandic government.

Her literary production falls principally into two main divisions: her original poems in Icelandic and her translations, in prose and verse, from Icelandic into English; both her own poems and her translations bear ample evidence of her poetic ability and her sure literary taste.

Her poems had for many years appeared regularly in American-Icelandic publications (using the term "American" in the continental sense) as well as in leading papers and periodicals in Iceland, before the publication of her previously mentioned collection *Candle Lights* in Reykjavik in 1939. These poems are rich in beauty and characterized by genuine lyric quality and literary artistry. The natural, mellow, and flowing language is most remarkable when it is remembered that the poetess left Iceland at the age of six. Her rare mastery of the Icelandic tongue, which becomes in her hands a most responsive and melodious instrument, is in itself a major achievement and an eloquent testimony to her deep

sensitiveness to beauty and her equally strong sense of poetic form.

With respect to subject-matter, although there is naturally, some overlapping, her collection **Candle Lights** contain primarily four kinds of poems.

There are first, and properly so, her many poems revealing her deep-rooted love of Iceland and the Icelandic cultural heritage, not least the sagas and the ancient poems, which she interprets with fine understanding in such poems as "Íslendingur sögufróði" (The Iclander Versed in Historical Lore), "Landabréfið" (The Map) and "Fornmenn" (Men of Old). In "Harpan" (The Harp) the poetess beautifully expressed her great indebtedness to the past, the Icelandic literary heritage, which is so much a part of her and her poetry. She has paid tribute to Stephan G. Stephansson in a memorable poem.

For you, members of the Leif Eiríksson Club, it is of special interest to know that Mrs. Johnson also pays tribute to the intrepid seafarer and leader of men for whom your organization is named, in a splendid poem, "Leifur heppni" (Leif the Lucky), picturing this first European discoverer of America as the personification of the spirit of adventure, of man's undying quest for the unknown. On the other hand, Iceland itself is uniquely portrayed in her poem "Íslenzk örnefni" (Icelandic Place Names), in which the names of places and natural phenomena are dexterously interwoven to form an enchanting metrical picture.

Secondly, there are in Mrs. Johnson's collection in question a number of lovely nature poems, like "Vor" (Spring) and "Spörfuglinn" (The Sparrow), to name but two, for as sensitive a soul as hers has not been left un-

touched by the magnificence and varied beauty of her surroundings on the West Coast in its changing seasonal garb. Graphic and truthful word pictures from external nature adorn many of her other poems as well.

Thirdly, a very important group in her selected poems are her deep-felt and feminine mother poems; such poems as "Gestur í vöggu" (A Guest in the Cradle) and "Vögguljóð" (Cradle Song) are instinct with mother love and mother joy; her strong attachment to her home is appealingly expressed in the poem "Hugsað á heimleið" (Thoughts When Homeward Bound). It may be added that she excels particularly in tenderly felt children's poems. These are predominant in her second published book of verse, "Sá eg svani" (Swans I Saw), Reykjavik, 1942, a charming collection for juvenile readers.

Returning to her main published collection to date, **Candle Lights**, poems in Icelandic folklore strain form, as it were, the prelude to the forth and concluding group in the collection, the ones inspired by her visit to the old homeland in 1935, and centering around fond memories from that visit. These poems are especially charming in their warmth of feeling and melodious form, not least her greeting upon her arrival and her farewell to her beloved native land.

Mrs. Johnson's original poems, thoroughly lyric in spirit and form, are made of such delicate fabric that they are not easily rendered into English. The opening poem "Candle Lights" of her collection by that title has, however, been faithfully and effectively translated by Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, who has even retained the typical Icelandic alliteration, and this poem is

highly characteristic of Mrs. Johnson's poetic sensitiveness and mastery of form (see *Icel. Canadian* Vol. 2 No. 2).

Those of us in Canada and the United States who were born and reared in Iceland, as well as, fortunately, many who were born of Icelandic parentage in either country, are in the happy position of possessing command of both the Icelandic and the English languages. Not a few in our midst have wisely made good use of this unusual opportunity to serve as interpreters of Icelandic literature and culture to the English speaking world. Among these Jakobína Johnson occupies, as is well known, a special place of honor and high distinction, generally recognized as our foremost translator of Icelandic poetry into the English language.

Her interpretation of Icelandic literature and culture has, indeed, been on a wide front. She has not only, as already mentioned, lectured extensively in English on Icelandic subjects, but has also written articles on Icelandic writers for American literary publications and translated Icelandic short stories into English. She has further, and very successfully rendered into English three notable Icelandic dramas: *Lénharður fógeti* (Governor Lenhard) by Einar H. Kvaran, *Galdra-Loftur* (Loft's Wish) by Jóhann Sigurjónsson, and *Nýársnóttin* (New Year's Eve) by Indriði Einarsson. The two first named of these were published in the widely known and highly regarded literary quarterly *Poet Lore* in Boston.

Noteworthy as these prose translations justly are, it is for her English translations of Icelandic verse that Mrs. Johnson has deservedly won widest acclaim as a translator, and render-

ed Icelandic literature great and lasting service with them. She has translated into English a large number of choice poems by leading Icelandic poets, generally with unusual excellence, both as regards the subject-matter and the spirit of the originals, and with commensurate mastery of form. These translations have appeared in such important American papers and periodicals as *The American-Scandinavian Review* in New York, *The Stratford Journal* in Boston, *The Literary Digest* in New York, as well as in the Icelandic Winnipeg Weeklies, and several have in recent years been reprinted in *The Icelandic Canadian*.

A considerable number of Mrs. Johnson's translations are also included in my collection *Icelandic Lyrics* (Reykjavik, 1930) and *Icelandic Poems and Stories* (New York, 1943), and some of her translations have been reprinted in other anthologies. Thus two translations from the latter volume just named are reprinted in *A Little Treasury of World Poetry* (New York, '52). Other two translations of hers are included in the collection *20th Century Scandinavian Poetry*, published in Sweden in 1950, the Icelandic section of which was prepared by Dr. Stefán Einarsson.

Herself a truly lyric poet, Mrs. Johnson has naturally, in her choice of translations, especially been attracted to similar poems by other Icelandic poets, and in that respect she has followed a wise course, for the affinity of spirit with the author and the poems translated has made it easier for her to enter deeply and sympathetically into the exacting task of successful verse translation. Let no one think, however, that she has avoided wrestling with translating major poems by

the poets in question. Nothing would be farther from the truth.

One need only call attention to the fact that she has translated into English highly successfully such masterful but unlike poems as "Forsjónin" (Providence) by Matthías Jochumsson, "Skilmálarnir" (The Terms) by Þorsteinn Erlingsson, "Undir Kalda-dal" (Near Cold-Dale) by Hannes Hatstein, "Norðurljós" (Northern Lights) by Einar Benediktsson, and "Við verkalok" (At Close of Day) and "Kvöld" (Evening) by Stephan G. Stephansson, to name some instances of her translations of major Icelandic poems. Besides Stephansson's poems she has translated equally successfully into English important poems by other Icelandic-Canadian poets, such as "Góða nótt" (Good Night) by Guttormur J. Guttormsson and "Þjónn ljóssins" (Servant of Light) by Einar P. Jónsson.

The task of the translator of poetry from one language into another is indeed a most difficult one, but at the same time a most noble and worthy undertaking. It is excellently described by the American poet and novelist, Hubert Creekmore, in his introduction to **A Little Treasury of World Poetry** previously referred to:

"The major purpose of translation, as I conceive it, whether of poetry or prose, is to bring to us an understanding—at the very least, some knowledge—of the thought and beauty of other cultures In translated poetry, we certainly should not expect to discover all the delights of nuance, rhythm, music, etc., that mark the original, and must be content with the beauty of the conception and whatever additional suggestions of its verbal beauty and emotion the translator may

be able to give us." Mr. Creekmore continues: "In the highest achievements of their function, translators are re-creators, and in that sense, poets as well. The finest translations become poems in English, as one may observe in numerous works usually thought to be original English poems."

It is the great glory of Jakobína Johnson that frequently in her English translations of Icelandic poems she has achieved just the above described effect. Her translations read as if they were original poems in English, and no greater compliment can be paid any translator. Take, for instance, her translation of Steingrímur Thorsteinsson's beautiful and masterly composed lyric "Svanasöngur á heiði" (Swansong on the Moorlands):

Alone, upon a summer's eve,
I rode the dreary moorlands.
—No more the way seemed bleak and
long

For sudden strains of lovely song
Were born across the moorlands.

The mountains glowed with rosy light.
—From far across the moorlands.
And like a sacred interlude
It fell upon the solitude
That song upon the moorlands.

It thrilled my soul with sweet response,
That song upon the moorlands.
As in a dream I rode ahead —
And knew not how the moments fled,
With swans upon the moorlands.

I think you will agree that this translation reads like an English poem; not only the words, but the thought and the mood as well, have been transmuted into the pure gold of poetry in the foreign language.

With her translations Jakobína Johnson has, therefore, extended the

range of Icelandic literature, just as she has, on the other hand, enriched Icelandic literature with her original poems rich in pictures from the forest-clad hills and mountains in her impressive scenic surroundings on the Pacific Coast.

Her translations are, furthermore, of special value to our Icelandic group in America, because, as already made clear, they make available to our young people, not familiar with the Icelandic language, and to the English-speaking world generally, select specimens of Icelandic poetry, which give an insight into the beauty and wealth of that important branch of Icelandic literature. Unhesitatingly, I, therefore, urge you, members of the Leif Eiríksson Club, and other young people of our Icelandic group, to acquaint yourself with Mrs. Johnson's translations from the Icelandic. In saying that, I am, of course, not in the least belittling the efforts of other able translators in that field, whose work also fully deserves your attention and who have earned our gratitude for their labors. But, obviously, any detailed discussion

of their translations is outside the prescribed limits of this anniversary address.

Further, let me observe that there is no cleavage between Jakobína Johnson's personality and her poetry. Behind her own poems, and reflected in her translations, one always feels the presence of a whole-souled and noble-minded woman; through her poems surges a deep under-current of human sympathy. Characteristic of her elevated view of life and idealism, the closing lines of her collection **Candle Lights** expresses her faith in the ultimate victory of goodness over the evil forces of the world.

In that forward-looking faith, we salute the poetess on the eve of her 70th birthday anniversary and record in deep gratitude our indebtedness to her.

This is also the eve of United Nations Day. Mindful of that fact I close with Jakobína Johnson's excellent translation of Guðmundur Guðmundsson's beautiful, timely and challenging "Prologue from **Peace on Earth**":

Lord, God of peace, my spirit's high ideal,
To Thee I lift my hands in mute appeal,
Omnipotent, a miracle imploring.
Grant to my soul a vision of Thy light,
Charge Thou my song with Thy compelling might,
That it may rise—Thy peace on earth restoring.

Lord, God of love, unto my spirit show
In all their truth the depths of human woe,
Wherefrom the groans of multitudes are calling,
Mingled with tears they rise around Thy feet,
Beseeching looks of dying eyes, entreat:
"Thy peace on earth, like dew on deserts falling."

Lord, God of wisdom, with prophetic fires
Cleanse Thou my soul, ennoble my desires,

Thy purpose to my lowly heart revealing.
 Thy wonder-power of love in song and sound
 Call from my harp in rhapsody profound,
 The suffering and broken spirits healing.

Lord, God of peace, Thy beating heart impels
 Mine own, when that with sweet compassion swells,
 Thy mercy for the sufferers imploring.
 Wherefore I feel my spirit's wings grow strong
 And courage rise to wake my harp in song.
 Oh, may it rise—Thy peace on earth restoring.

BOOK REVIEW:

MODERN SAGAS

THE STORY OF THE ICELANDERS IN NORTH AMERICA

by THORSTINA WALTERS

It is now more than eighty years since the first Iclander left his home to settle in North America. Even those who came over as children during those early years are now growing few in number. There are however a large number of the sons and daughters of these people, born in this country, growing up in pioneer surroundings, who carry in their memories tales of the early days told them by their parents, and can recall incidents from their own early lives spent in these frontier settlements. It is important that this source material should be recorded and for this reason, Thorstina Walter's "Modern Sagas" is a real contribution to the history of the western Icelanders.

We are fortunate that Thorstina Walters is numbered among these children of the pioneers, for she brings to her work a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and a literary style that makes the book pleasant reading.

The most delightful part of the book is her account of her own childhood days in North Dakota, but she manages to carry over the quality that makes her personal memoirs interesting into the chapters dealing with the home life of other pioneer families, the foundation and growth of their churches and their struggle to educate themselves and their children. There is one chapter devoted to brief biographies of prominent Icelanders from North Dakota. Another reviews the history of the early Vinland voyages in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Though she gives some space to the settlements in Canada and Wisconsin, most of the book deals with the life of the Icelandic people in North Dakota.

Whether you are a student of local history or a casual reader who enjoys something a little different, you will find "Modern Sagas" entertaining and worth while.

Helen Sigurdson

“STAFHOLT”



ICELANDIC OLD FOLKS HOME, IN BLAINE, WASHINGTON

A visitor to Blaine, Washington, drives up “D” Street from Peace Portal Drive (U.S. Highway 99). Two blocks up on the north side of the street, he sees a low building of large dimensions, built in bungalow style. The walls are red brick, topped with unpainted cedar shakes, giving the building a pleasing rustic appearance. Across the gable over the porch is a line of widely spaced letters made of bronze and forming the word “STAFHOLT”. Over this line is a round bronze plaque with a raised image of a falcon in the centre. In front of the building, which stands well back from the street, are spacious green lawns, with flower-beds and shrubbery. Shrubs and flowers are also planted all along the walls of the building. In front there is ample parking space, paved with concrete. By this time the visitor has become sufficiently interested to avail himself of this parking space and take a closer look. So he gets out of his car and walks up to the main entrance of the building. On

the porch he notices two well made park benches, one on each side: back of them are flower boxes, built into the concrete side walls of the porch. In these are geraniums and lobelias in bloom. He walks into the anteroom. On the wall on his right hangs a large framed map of Iceland. On his left is a little table on which stands a miniature Icelandic farm cottage (bær), made by one of the residents, Guðmundur Guðbrandsson, now 94 years old. On the wall in front of him and on the left side of the door leading into the dining room is placed a glass-covered miniature of a square-rigger sailing vessel, made by Captain Einar Einarsson, who recently died in Bellingham. On this wall also, but to the right of the door, hang the pictures of two brothers, Ellis and Henry Stoneson,—but more of them later.

The foregoing description is by way of furnishing atmosphere for what follows, as such minute description of the entire premises would be altogether

too lengthy and perhaps tiring to the reader. What follows will therefore be more general.

In the dining room is an open fireplace, a piano, a microphone system and a television set. The kitchen is equipped with all modern appliances. Among these are, an electrically cooled food storage space, a large deep-freeze, stainless steel electric cooking stove, steam table, etc, etc.

The heating plant is an automatic oil burning system, fed from a large tank sunk in the ground at the back of the building. The plant is enclosed in an all re-inforced concrete chamber, with a fireproof door leading into the building. The only stairs in the whole building are the concrete steps leading up from the heating plant to this door, which is always kept locked.

Other special rooms are: Matron's quarters, Matron's office, with buzzer system connecting it with every room in the building; two recreation rooms, one for the women, the other for the men; two toilet rooms, with bathtubs and showers; laundry room, with modern equipment and a small dining room for the staff.

Other rooms in the building are bedrooms, which accommodate 50 residents. The greater number of these are single rooms.

One of our staff members, Mrs. Anna Swanson, built a five-room house for herself at the back of the Home building. This is made of the same materials as the main structure. She deeded the house to the Home with the proviso that it is to be her private home as long as she wishes to live in it.

The total value of the Home and equipment is now \$131,500. Its present indebtedness is \$13,000. It was officially opened February 1, 1949, and had

accommodations at that time for 28 residents and staff. The following years 2 wings were added, so that now there is room for 50; and it is filled to capacity, with a large waiting list of applicants for admission. Visitors from far and near are loud in their praises of this home for the aged, and it ranks high with the State authorities.

How has all this been made possible? Here is the story in brief. A chapter of the Icelandic National League of North America was organized in Blaine in the early spring of 1944, and named "Aldan" (The Wave). At one of its early meetings, the question of the feasibility of building an Icelandic Old Folks Home in Blaine was raised. To many it seemed a wild notion, but since the idea was, in itself, an eminently worthy one, a committee of three was named to look into the matter. Those named were: Rev. G. P. Johnson, J. J. Straumfjord and Rev. A. E. Kristjánsson. Soon afterwards, Andrew Danielson and M. G. Johnson were added to the committee; and, as interest in the project grew, the committee was still further enlarged.

Why were we attempting the seemingly impossible? We wanted to care for our own. We knew that many of our people, now growing old, were born in Iceland and that, while they have proved themselves to be among the best citizens of their adopted country, they still live in and by memories of their Icelandic cultural heritage. When they are placed in State Institutions, they feel as if they were alone in the midst of strangers. We would spare them this loneliness by building a home for them, where they could find comfort in living over again experiences common to them all, read Icelandic books and papers, and sing

their childhood songs together. We felt that we owed to our pioneer fathers and mothers such cheer and comfort as we were able to provide. So, after much talk and much hesitation, we decided to make an actual test of the possibilities, beginning with ourselves. The first \$1,000 were pledged by members of the committee, and going out into the local community we soon had \$7,000, mostly in cash. This, by agreement, was to be held in trust and refunded to the donors if building operations were not started within two years. Our first tentative plans called for a home to accommodate 40 people. From the first we were agreed that we would either do this thing right or not do it at all. True, \$7,000 would not go very far, but we widened our circle of appeal and kept on plugging.

The first real break in the situation came when the Stoneson Brothers, large scale builders in San Francisco (and former Blaine boys), came to our assistance with an initial donation of \$10,000. Later they added a sum of \$5,000. They were also the designers of the building, and they have never ceased to interest themselves in the Home. This explains the presence of their pictures in the anteroom already mentioned. The architectural plans and specifications were made by the Sterling Building Company of San Francisco, which is composed of Mr. Chris Finson and Dr. A Oddstad and family. These plans represented a very considerable financial item, but they were donated by the Company.

One is tempted to tell the whole story of the sacrifice of money and effort, on the part of hundreds of our people, that has gone into building of this Home, but that would

make a book out of a magazine article. Yet let me cite just one instance of this generosity and enthusiasm that made it possible.

When the original committee of "Aldan" had come to the point of selecting a site for the proposed Home, and after studying the advantages and disadvantages of a number of available sites in and around Blaine, differences of opinions developed as to which site to choose. In order to solve this problem, the committee decided to call a public meeting in Blaine to find out whether there was a general preference for any one site. The meeting was well attended and it soon became apparent that those present were almost unanimous for the site on which the Home now stands. Unfortunately the price of this site was higher than that of some of the others. Someone got the idea of "calling the bluff" of the audience by asking for contributions then and there to raise the whole price of the property. In a few minutes the required sum of \$1,000 had been pledged and the committee's problem solved.

From then on things began to happen. An Association was formed of all those who had donated to the Home. A constitution and by-laws were drawn up and passed. And the Association was incorporated under the State law governing charitable and educational institutions, which are exempt from taxation. In all this we were fortunate in having as the chairman of our committee a lawyer, Einar Simonarson, who has taken care of all our legal work without any financial remuneration.

Among the provisions of our Constitution and by-laws are the following: A nine member Board of Trustees,

each member elected for a term of three years by a vote of the members of the Association at the annual meeting in May. Each member receives by mail a notice of the meeting, a list of candidates for Trustees on a ballot paper, and a self-addressed envelope in which to return his marked ballot. In admitting residents, the by-law declares that priority shall be given to Icelanders, persons of Icelandic descent on either side of the family, and those married to Icelanders. It also provided that the Home shall be non-sectarian as regards religion. In pursuance of this last stipulation, a Lutheran and a Unitarian minister have from the first conducted religious services in Icelandic, one service a month being given by each. This has proved very satisfactory to all concerned. When Rev. Einar Sturlaugsson was here, he preached in the Home and both local ministers participated in the service.

When the Home had been incorporated and the first Board of Trustees elected, the original "Aldan" committee was dissolved and its function transferred to the new Board, made up as follows: Einar Simonarson, President; S. H. Chrsitianson, Vice-President; Andrew Danielson, Secretary; J. J. Stråumfjord, Treasurer; F. J. Frederickson, Harold Ogmundson, J. E. Westford, A. E. Kristjánsson, H. S. Helgason.

The present Board is composed of the same members, with the exception of F. J. Frderickson, J. E. Westford and H. S. Helgason. Their places have been filled by Skafti Olason, Tani Bjornson and T. Asmundson.

It has been the constant aim of the Board to build and manitain a **home** for our aged — not just another insti-

tution. We have a registered nurse residing in the home, and a local doctor has been designated to be on call when needed. There is a library of some 1500 books, mostly Icelandic, in the Home. The residents enjoy many home privileges, such as going to the kitchen for a cup of coffee between meals, bsides the regular afternoon coffee. The birthday of each resident is remembered with something special. Often relatives bring in birthday cheer. Holidays, such as Christmas, New Years Eve, Thanksgiving Day, etc. are celebrated. Then the Home is decorated and special fare is provided. Outside groups come in on these days and on other occasions, providing entertainment and, as nearly as possible, all-Icelandic menus. Cars are supplied to take the residents to the Icelandic Day Celbration in Peace Arch Park and to other local meetings that they wish to attend. Visitors are numerous; and the residents go out to visit, especially during the summer.

We have been fortunate in our matrons. On them we must depend to create and maintain the desired home atmosphere. Mrs. Gene Anderson, our first matron, was a kindly woman, a real home-maker, who loved the people she served. Mrs. Thora Scully, a registered nurse, combined in her person most of the qualities needed for such a position. Efficient, both as a nurse and as an administrator, she sought to make the Home an example for others to follow; and she endeared herself to the residents. It is to be regretted that we could not have the benefit of her devoted service longer. She resigned for personal reasons on the 1st of November this year. But her influence on life in the Home will continue.

Even the casual visitor is pleasantly surprised to meet the smiling faces of so many of the residents, and to observe the spirit of mutual helpfulness pervading the Home. He will see someone leading a blind person to wherever he or she wishes to go; and others carrying a cup of coffee, messages, or other things to those who are confined to their rooms; going to the Post Office for them, getting things from the stores, and innumerable other voluntary services. Some help the staff with their work. The beauty of the grounds would suffer were it not for the work and constant care of Mr. John Stevens, a resident in the Home and a horticultural enthusiast. He is ably seconded by Mr. Teitson, who is especially interested in gladioli. Mr. Teitson also has a little shop behind the Home, where he makes and repairs things. He is our Mr. Fix-It. In short, the residents are themselves making the place **their** home by taking a keen interest in its affairs and by lending a helping hand wherever they can. It does one's heart good to see this large family gather in the dining room before an open fire on New Year's Eve. The room is aglow with light and appropriate decorations, the members all dressed up in colored paper hats of many shapes and sizes, tooting away on gay-colored cardboard trumpets and singing the songs of their youth and homeland. At such times they throw off the weight

of the years and recapture the spirit of their younger days.

Some one may ask the question: "How did you come to name the place "Staffholt"? The original committee asked for, and received suggestions from many people in Blaine, Seattle, and elsewhere. Then they called a meeting at which all these suggestions were discussed, and the name adopted by majority vote. The name "Staffholt" was suggested by Mr. Jón Magnússon of Seattle. Among a number of reasons he gave for its adoption was, that "Staffholt" was the name of the childhood home of the mother of the Stone-son Brothers, in Borgarfjörður, Iceland. This clinched the argument, and the decision was made unanimous.

All concerned with the building and maintenance of Staffholt, naturally feel a great satisfaction, if not pride, in their accomplishment to date. But they know that work well begun is, after all, only half done. There is still the indebtedness to be paid, certain needed outbuildings to be provided, and a further expansion of accommodations called for by an increasingly large waiting list of applicants. But we believe that this very worthy undertaking, which began simply as a venture of faith and has thus far been so fully justified, will continue to receive the same generous response until the need has been satisfied and the task finished.

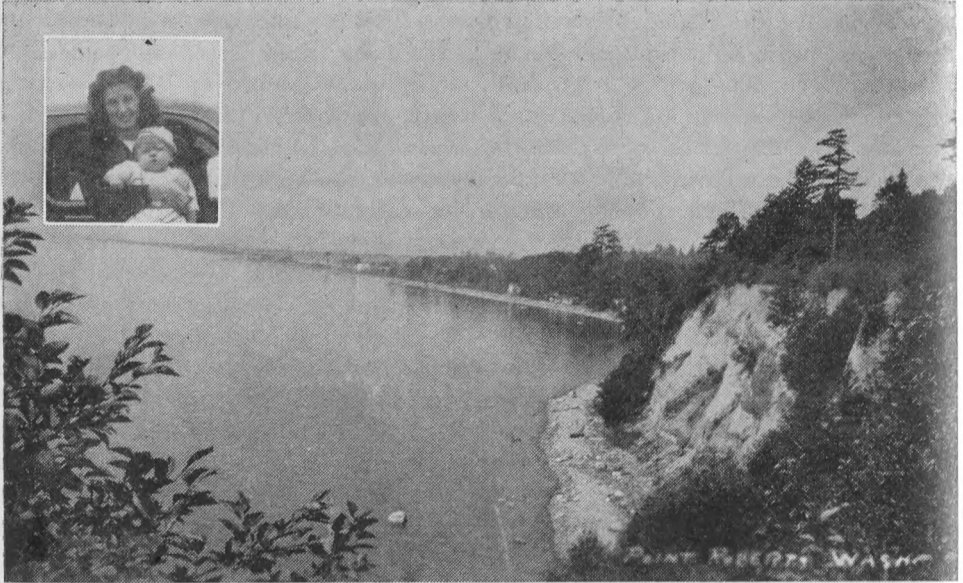
A. E. Kristjánsson

Four documentary films about Canada are included in an eight-week programme of films on the Commonwealth, opening at the Imperial Institute Cinema in London on October

5th. They are "Royal City" (New Westminster, B. C.), "Winter in Quebec", "Fundy Holiday" and "Loon's Necklace", an old Indian legend about masks.

A POINT OF INTEREST

by SIGRID VOPNFORD



My home is in a small but significant little corner of the great Pacific Northwest—a peninsula, six square miles, called Point Roberts, and is in the State of Washington, U.S.A. It is geographically strange, historically rich, and economically—a problem. No place could be more beautiful, more exasperating, or more fascinating. The very problems which annoy us, also endear this little “orphan” community to its residents, as they are mainly caused by it’s unusual location.

Our Strange Geography

Although belonging to the United States, Point Roberts is joined by land only to Canada, and juts out into the Straits of Georgia, a part of beautiful Puget Sound. This means we **have** to cross the border twice to get to other parts of our own country. Our

school children travel approximately thirty miles through Canada every morning on their way to Blaine District School on the mainland.

Our Rich History

Having been raised in this community, its history is forever interesting to me. It is a source of unending amazement that so many changes could be wrought since the turn of the century - - - that people who are fifty years old and even younger, remember when there were only rough trails instead of roads, horses and buggies instead of cars, and a trip to Ladner (8 miles into Canada from here) took a whole day.

The other day I went over to my friends and neighbors, Laugie and Ella Thorstenson, and told them I was to write an article for The Iceland-

ic Canadian about Point Roberts, and wondered if they could give me some facts about the first Icelandic settlers, that I might use. Laugie said he had a few minutes before chore time, and would gladly tell me what he could. We sat down at the kitchen table, Ella poured us a cup of coffee, I took out pencil and paper, and we started in. Laugie was born and raised in Point Roberts, his parents being among the first Icelandic settlers here, and he can tell many a yarn about the "old days". When I left, there wasn't much writing on my paper, but we had wandered far afield from the few basic facts I had requested. Laugie's chores, and my own unprepared dinner alike, were forgotten as Laugie recalled the adventures and hardships of his parents and other first settlers in this location.

Helgi Thorsteinson, his foster brother, Paul Thorsteinson, and their families moved here from Victoria, B. C., in 1894. The main reason for their coming was the depression in Victoria, and the hope that the land here would soon be homesteaded by the U.S. government, thereby enabling them to obtain free farm land. For fifty dollars they bought squatters' rights from a man who owned a log cabin overlooking the bay, and the two families lived in that small cabin together for four years. They built gillnet boats with sails for power, and fished for salmon to earn a meagre living.

When these families came, they found two other Icelandic families had already come here from Seattle—they were the John Burns family, and the Kristjan Bensons. About the same time as the Thorsteinsons came, Sigurdur Myrdal and family also came from Victoria, and later Jonas and

Gudmundur Samuelson. In later years many more Icelanders moved into this community, until it was a regular Icelandic settlement.

In 1908, after a struggle the story of which cannot be related here, the area of Point Roberts was finally opened for homesteaders, and claims were filed by all those who had been squatting here for years. Helgi and Dagbjort Thorsteinson obtained forty acres, and built a frame house which still stands beside Laugie's new and modern farm house. The actual cash cost of the old frame house was \$80.00, this being for shingles, windows and hardware. The rest of the lumber was beach-combed.

It would, of course, take a book to go into details about the lives of the first settlers, and their individual personalities, not only because of all the data involved, but because it would take reams of words to do them justice. Maybe some day someone will write one. In the meantime, this small community has installed a \$3500.00 electric organ in its church, as a memorial to the first settlers, who pioneered so that this generation might live in comfort.

Our Economic Problems

We are a small community, approximately fifty families. All our supplies have to be brought over from the mainland in a sealed and bonded truck. For farmers this means freight to pay on feed coming in and produce going out. Therefore farming has dwindled to next to nothing.

Surrounding the peninsula of Point Roberts are the richest salmon fishing grounds in the Puget Sound. Millions of fish are caught here every year, providing income for hundreds of

boat owners, their crews, the canneries, and cannery workers. Since the fish traps were established in the early thirties, no large canneries operate locally. Neither is there any harbour here for boat owners to moor their boats. Therefore not much of the fishing industry money comes into the community. However, there are some locally owned boats, kept in Blaine harbor, and many residents work on fishing boats during the season. We also have a cannery here, operated by the Iwersen brothers, which runs most of the year, providing employment to several local people.

Telephones we cannot get - - - too expensive for the revenue involved. Good roads - - ditto.

The hope for the future is the summer tourist business, which seems to be growing annually because of our proximity to the booming B. C. city of Vancouver.

In Conclusion

In spite of its size, Point Roberts is a very active community. There is a Lutheran Church, at present engaged in raising funds for the \$3500.00 Memorial Organ; a local organization

building a \$2000.00 addition to their community hall; a Mother's Club, currently trying to raise money for a movie projector and sound track for the local grade school. (The first five grades go to school here). Almost all residents have cars and think nothing of driving fifty miles to Bellingham for most of their shopping needs. We go eighty miles to Ladner, B. C., to see a show, or ferry over to Vancouver, about a half-hour ferry and driving time from here.

No family has ever moved away from here without missing it sorely; no family has ever moved in but that they find all their friends and relatives love to visit here as often as possible; and no child was ever raised here that doesn't come back to visit as often as possible, bringing spouse and family if any there be. We are proud of our community, and like to emphasize its good points and minimize its problems. If ever we despair, we can take comfort in two things: the vast improvement since the days of our first settlers; and the never-ending panorama of scenic beauty surrounding us — here for the first settlers, here for us, and here for all generations to come.

WINNIPEG APPOINTED TO IMPORTANT POSITION

Walter Glen Eyford began his service with the Canadian National Express Co., in 1929.

He served with the American army overseas from 1943 till he arrived home and got his discharge in 1946. On going back to his civilian post he was made express agent at Portage La Prairie. In 1950 he became Traffic Supervisor in Edmonton, and transferred to Saskatoon in 1951.

Mr. Eyford returned to Winnipeg in May of this year, and now has been appointed Superintendent of Road Transport, Western Region, (a new department of the Can. Nat. Railways.) This was one of four top level appointments announced by F. A. Gaffney, general manager.

Mr. Eyford comes of old pioneer stock. He is the son of Bogi Eyford, formerly of Pembina, N. D., now a resident of Winnipeg.

The Icelandic Community in Los Angeles

The real "invasion" to Los Angeles by Icelandic people began in the early 'Twenties. There had been, however, a small vanguard before that. Back in 1916 Jón Thorbergson and his first wife, Elizabeth, had arrived here; but they found that even then they were preceded by the widowed Sigríður Guðmundson with her two daughters, and by Foster Johnson from North Dakota with his family. Before his name got anglicized, this pioneer on the South-West coast was Thorsteinn Jónsson, originally from Þverá in Eyjafjörður. His wife was Friðbjörg Guðlaugsdóttir from Steinkirkja in Fnjóskadal. Their two children still live here, Lillian Heath, and Henry Johnson.

In 1921 and '22 Icelandic people from various parts began to converge on "L.A.". True to their traditions, these pioneers lost no time in organizing. Thus we find that 1922 saw the formation of an Icelandic Club, of which Gunnar Guðmundson was the first president. The vice-president was Jón Thorbergson, and the secretary-treasurer Njáll Thorkelson, now known as Neil Thor.

The following year a Ladies' Auxiliary was organized, with Ingibjörg Guðmundson, Gunnar's wife, as president. The secretary was Mrs. Mae Cook, adopted daughter of Raguel Johnson (formerly of Grafton, N. Dak) and his wife Soffia, who was a sister of Ingibjörg Guðmundson. This ladies' club was in existence for twelve years and did much good community work. The members devoted hours to sewing and fancywork; frequently held tombolas and bazaars to raise funds for welfare work,

The meetings of these two organizations were held in private homes, with the hosts footing the bill for the lunch. This must have been quite an item at that, for Mrs. Hans Ortner has recalled an attendance of 65 at one of the meetings. For entertainment there would be debates and speeches, and plenty of singing.

Nor was there any dearth of speakers. Halldór Kiljan Laxness, who sojourned here for about two years, was always willing and able. Einar Kvaran was among our visiting speakers. Magnús Árnason was a frequent speaker and good supporter. Halldór Halldórson was frequently called upon to recite his original poetry; Sigurður Helgason supplied music and assisted with the singing; and there were many others. Club activities were well supported; at one time 150 tickets were sold for a sponsored dinner.

Among club projects was the founding of a Literary Society. Quite a number of Icelandic books were bought, and permission was secured to keep them in a separate section of the City Library. These were widely read for many years, but later fell into disuse.

Good fellowship and generous neighbourliness seemed to be the keynote of club activities. As an example of the latter, one may cite the housewarming of Jón Thorbergson where the guests presented a Wedgwood stove to the homemakers. A picnic was a feature of every summer month, while in winter monthly meetings were held — always conducted in Icelandic.

Of more recent years Los Angeles has spread out with almost explosive violence, until it now covers about 450

square miles. Inevitably this process has scattered the people of Icelandic origin over a wide area and made it difficult for many to attend meetings regularly. But there is no group more co-operative when it comes to helping some worthy cause. A few years back, for instance, two successful tombolas were held. The first one raised money for the Old People's Home in Blaine, while next year the same was done for the Home at Mountain, N. Dak. Thus the helping hand reaches out quite some way.

In 1952 the president of the club was a man with the un-Icelandic name of Nash. His eligibility for the post stemmed from the fact that he is married to a girl from Reykjavík. His interest in the Club is shown by the fact that he conceived the idea of publishing a little paper which, though in the English language, is called "Félagsblaðið".

It is modest enough in appearance, mimeographed on colored paper, and it makes its appearance about every six weeks. Its aims are to gather news of Icelandic people living in the city, and elsewhere; to tell of visitors and newcomers, and, as Mr. Nash put it, "to promote more good times together". In this way, many can be reached who seldom are able to get to club meetings.

As to the future of our club, there seems little cause for pessimism. There has been a recent and welcome addition of very interested members with the arrival of Icelandic "war brides". This, and the growth of interest in Iceland among Americans generally, is likely to ensure a continuing interest in our language and heritage among our group.

Guðný M. Thorwaldson

THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

Founded 1910

Headquarters: 127 East Seventy-third Street, New York 21, N. Y.

A non-profit institution, supported entirely by voluntary contributions and membership, promoting knowledge and understanding between America and Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Its program includes publication of the illustrated quarterly AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW; the monthly news bulletin SCAN; translations in English of Scandinavian classics and contemporary works; exchange of students and trainees; a Music Center; a Library; lectures, receptions and exhibits.

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The 75th Anniversary Of The First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba



The Three Church Buildings occupied by the First Lutheran Congregation up to the present time.

Religious faith and religious worship have always, since Iceland adopted Christianity in the year 1000, profoundly influenced the pattern of life of the Icelandic people wherever they have made their homes. The fact that many church affiliations exist among them would seem to indicate their independence of thought, determination, and often courage to worship God as the dictates of their heart and mind compel.

Wherever settlements of even a few Icelanders have been founded on this continent almost immediate arrangements have been made to form church organizations. Invariably they have been not only centres of religious worship, but also the focal point around which the cultural life of the community gravitated and centred.

The largest and the most influential of such church organizations among the Icelandic people in America is the First Lutheran church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, which most fittingly devoted the week of October 25th, to religious services and varied social and

cultural gatherings to commemorate seventy-five years of continuous service to its adherents here. Every one of those years has marked a milestone of progress and expansion. The phenomenal growth and progress of this organization, the ever broadening scope of its activities, and the fact that most of the third and fourth generation descendants of its founders still adhere thereto and give the organization leadership, bear testimony that it has had something worthwhile to offer its members both spiritually and culturally. The strength and unity it has achieved and the expansion it has enjoyed no less bear witness to the calibre of the leadership it has received since its founding.

It is not difficult to find the principal reasons for the success of this organization. Firstly, it has had the good fortune to have at its spiritual helm three outstanding leaders, who were men of vision and foresight, who won recognition for leadership far beyond their local field of endeavor. All have been the recipients of honor-

ary doctorate degrees from notable institutions of higher learning.

The first of these was Dr. Jón Bjarnason whose service to the congregation extended over a period of thirty years during the organization's difficult formative years. He, together with his wife, frú Lára, was able to surmount all obstacles confronting the budding congregation and thereby lay a firm and an enduring foundation for his successors on which to build a sound superstructure. His name is still revered by his remaining contemporaries, not only those who supported his religious views, but also by many of those who at the time most vigorously opposed him. Few other men of his time could have conquered so many apparently insurmountable barriers that faced the early attempts of organization.

Upon Dr. Bjarnason's death in 1914, Rev. B. B. Jónsson was called to assume the charge which he filled with distinction, tact, and talent until his death in 1938. Dr. Jónsson's period was one of transition as well as growth and development within the congregation. It witnessed a departure from the exclusive use of the Icelandic language at services when it became apparent that the second and third generations could not be reached by the medium of the Icelandic language alone. Dr. Jónsson envisioned that this tendency would increase, and although he had many critics and sceptics within the congregation who vigorously opposed him and questioned his wisdom at the time this move was made, later came to realize that this change in policy not only saved the congregation from failure at the time, but it has also been one of the

prime reasons for its growth and development in later years.

At Dr. Jónsson's retirement, Rev. Valdimar J. Eylands, the present pastor who had served long enough as assistant to Dr. Jónsson to win the approval and the confidence of the congregation was called upon to become its leader. Rev. Eylands brought with him youth and vigor and an unlimited capacity for work, all of which have resulted in a continuous growth and expansion of the congregation so that it now embraces a larger membership than ever (1878) and has financial security which it has never enjoyed before. The present Victor Street church is free of indebtedness and the recent renovation program involving and expenditure of over \$15,000, as well as a new manse, completes a long contemplated building program. The splendor of the newly renovated church edifice is in marked contrast with the original humble home of the congregation at Nena Street and Pacific Avenue, where the pioneer founders no less proudly but piously worshipped seventy-five years ago.

No account of the development of the Icelandic Lutheran Church life in Winnipeg is complete without mentioning the contribution of Rev. F. J. Bergmann. He had founded a Lutheran Tabernacle Congregation which built a small church on the corner of Sargent and Furby. Rev. Bergmann, however, envisioned the time when all Icelandic Lutherans in Winnipeg would worship in the same church and that the accommodation available at the time would not suffice. It was therefore largely at his insistence that the present church edifice, the finest erected by Icelanders anywhere, was built in 1912-13. Great tribute must

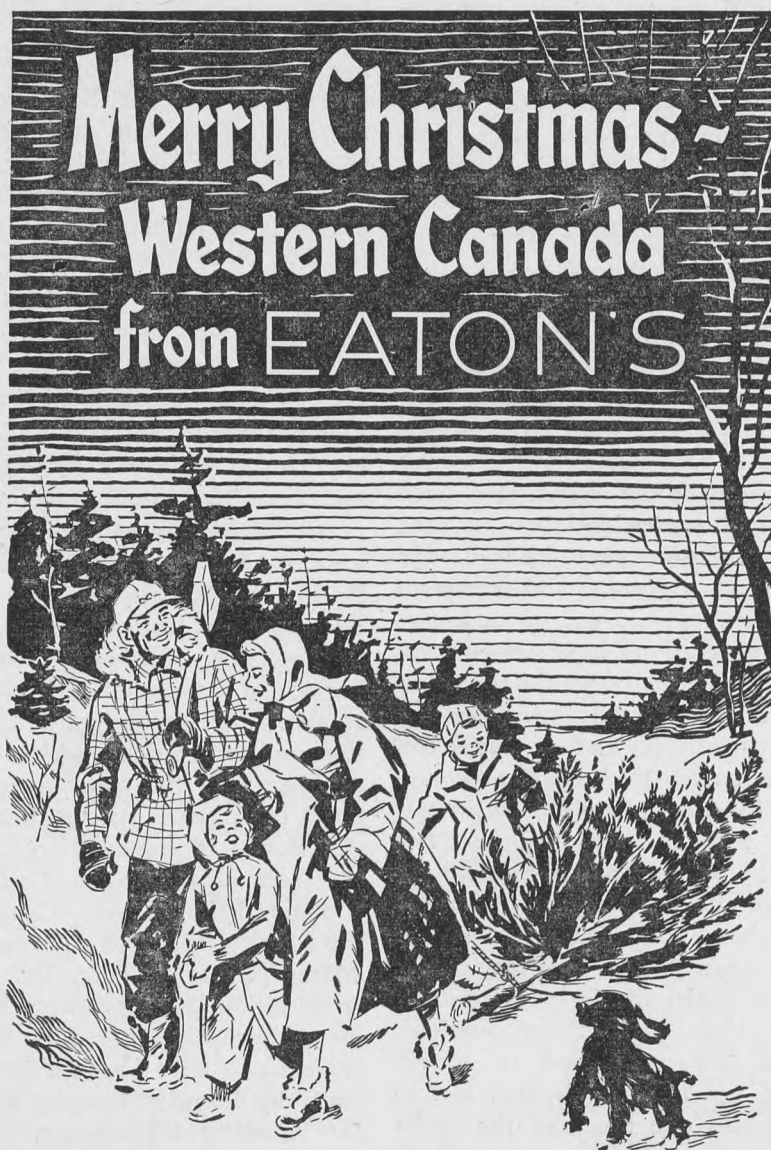
be paid the leaders of the small building committee which in spite of extremely limited resources never relented until the project was completed. To Rev. Bergmann must be attributed a major portion of credit for the successful completion of this undertaking. Some two years after Rev. Bergmann's death The First Lutheran congregation purchased the church and has occupied it since 1921.

Secondly, the church organization has had the extremely good fortune in having laymen of exceptionally high quality and calibre to solve and manage its administrative problems. Foremost among them was Dr. B. J. Brandson, L.L.D., who during all his active years here, gave the church that same unsurpassed leadership that he gave his own profession where he won wide recognition, respect, and renown. These men and women of each successive generation have given unstintingly of their valuable time and talent to the successful management of church affairs, and of their financial resources to keep the congregation functioning with continuous progress throughout its history. They have been people who clearly realized the value and the necessity of a good united church organization as an influence upon happy, healthy family life. The ladies of the congregation, through their various organizations, have no less contributed in a rich measure, not only financially, but to them is also due much of the credit for the success of the social activities of the church, upon which ever increasing emphasis is placed.

Thirdly, it appears evident that families of the older generation succeeded in instilling in their young the value and importance of a church af-

filiation. That good early parental influence has grown upon each succeeding generation, for the young have found as they grew older that the influence was wholesome. Each succeeding generation has found within the church not only enriched companionship with God, but also with their fellow men. Similarity in interests, in social and religious background, have helped to strengthen the bonds and effect that unity which the congregation now enjoys.

The anniversary celebration activities began Sunday morning, October 25th, with a well-attended, impressive religious service, which was also broadcast over CBW to a large listening audience. The evening service which was followed by a convocation in Divinity, conferring upon Rev. Eylands a Doctor of Divinity degree (*honoris causa*) by the United College, Winnipeg, was one of the most colorful and impressive ceremonies ever held in the church. The Faculty of United College and many distinguished visitors, together with the congregation, overtaxed the capacity of the church. The candidate was presented by Dr. E. G. D. Freeman of United College. Dr. Graham, Principal and Chairman of the Faculty, delivered the convocation address reprinted here. Dr. Eylands' appreciation, also appearing here, was most appropriate. Greeting and congratulations were brought for Dr. Eylands by Premier Douglas Campbell, Dr. Rúnólfur Marteinsson, Rev. Haraldur Sigmar (Gimli), Rev. Philip M. Petursson (First Federated Church, Winnipeg), Professor Richard Beck, Rev. F. W. Lenz (St. Peter's English Lutheran Church, Winnipeg). Miss Mattie Halldorson, on behalf of the choir, presented Dr. Eylands with a



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pulpit gown. In conclusion Victor Jonasson, President of the Board of Trustees, spoke briefly. A large number of congratulatory messages were received from Iceland and from leading men and organizations among the Icelanders on this continent. A social hour and refreshments in the lower auditorium concluded this historic occasion.

On Wednesday, October 28th, the combined church choirs, comprising over sixty voices, under the direction of Mrs. B. Violet Isfeld, with Mrs. Pearl Johnson, Lilja Eylands, and Alvin Blondal as soloists, presented an excellent and varied programme of sacred music. On Friday, October 30th, a programme featuring a short play

and movies, under the joint auspices of the Young People's Society and the Sunday School, attracted a large audience.

The concluding event of the week's festivities was the annual good-will dinner, sponsored by the Board of Deacons, for the aged and infirm. Besides the one hundred dinners served to people confined to their homes, eighty were served at the church.

The "Icelandic Canadian" and officers and members of the Icelandic Canadian Club take this opportunity to offer Dr. Eylands personally, and the organization which he so ably heads, sincere congratulations on past achievements and best wishes for future success.

J. K. Laxdal

★ ★ ★

ADDRESS

by **DR. W. C. GRAHAM, M.A., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.D.***

Reverend Sir and Friends:

It gives me great happiness, this evening, to be the bearer of warm greetings and hearty congratulations from United College on the occasion of this celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of this congregation.

That it is fitting that the College should take such action will appear to all who take the trouble to look into the history of this congregation. For many of its members played a leading part in a very fruitful relationship which developed between the years 1901 and 1913 between the Icelandic Lutheran Synod and Wesley College, one of the parent institutions of United College.

During those years, thanks to this relationship, the Icelandic language was taught as an elective subject in the curriculum of the College, along with Greek, French and German. At that time the study of Latin was still compulsory. The two great names associated with this work during this period are those of the Rev. Friðrik J. Bergmann and the Rev. Rúnólfur Marteinnsson. Even after the partnership between the Synod and the College in the teaching of Icelandic was discontinued the College continued to offer this subject as an elective through the labors of Mr. Jóhann G. Jóhannsson, and Professor Skúli Johnson, then Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at the College. Not until 1927, when Professor Johnson transferred his services to the University, was the

* Principal and Chairman of the Faculty of United College, Winnipeg.

teaching of the Icelandic language discontinued.

In the early years of this period Icelandic was a very popular subject. Delving back into the old class lists, for example, one finds that in the session 1901-1902 the class in this subject numbered 25. This interest continued for some years, though in common with all other non-English language courses, Icelandic felt the impact of the utilitarian spirit which waxed steadily stronger as the new technology developed.

It would be rash to claim here any specific relation as cause and effect; but I think it is true that during these first two decades of this century, while Icelandic remained on the curriculum, the Icelandic people of the community enjoyed what one might describe as an era of great cultural achievement. From their ranks went forth men and women who became distinguished for their intellectual force and their moral probity in every walk of life but particularly in the sphere of formal government, in the learned professions, in all levels of education and in higher education particularly in the field of pure learning in the humanities and in the natural sciences.

If it were the thing to do at this time, I could easily offer a long list of outstanding citizens of Icelandic stock who reached and who still hold places of distinction in the life of this city and province, as well as far beyond these bounds. I have decided against such a roll call because I would certainly omit many with equal right to be mentioned. It is better to offer this tribute in general terms.

The basic affinities which exist between the Icelandic cultural heritage and the culture of the Western World

as a whole are evidenced not only by the ease which immigrants from Iceland fitted into their new environment in this land but by the magnificence of their response early in their history here, when the call came in 1914 to defend the characteristic value of western culture. It is a matter of record that, by percentage of population, the response of the Icelandic people equalled that of people of Scotch and English ancestry. To no element of our population is the value we define as freedom dearer, by none are the basic principles of true democracy more clearly understood or more loyally supported and practiced.

Before I draw these remarks to a close I would like to say a few words about the indebtedness of the College to the Icelandic community. Over the years our College has benefitted greatly from the services rendered by many Icelanders to our Faculty. I have already mentioned the services of Mr. Bergmann, Dr. Marteinsson, Mr. Jóhannsson and Professor Skúli Johnson. To this list must be added Professor Tryggvi Oleson, Dean O. T. Anderson and Mrs. Wilhelmina Mabb, the last two of whom are on our Faculty today. But it is not only on the Faculty but in our governing bodies, our Board and Senate, and perhaps above all in our Student Body that we have benefitted from the leadership, the ability and the character of Icelandic members of the College. As I let my mind range over the last fifteen years I can recall many of them to my memory, and always with a sense of gratitude for the great contribution they have made to the life of the College, a contribution which I know they continue to make to the community at large since they have left our halls.

It is this experience which we have had with the Icelandic people through the College which makes it such a pleasure to bring greetings and congratulations to this Church which has played such a large part in cultivating in so many of them those qualities of

mind and character from which we of the College have benefitted. And in token of this appreciation I now have the honor, by authority of the Senate of United College, to declare a Convocation in Divinity duly constituted for the purpose of conferring a degree.



Dr. Eylands' Address of Acceptance

Dr. Graham,
Members of the Senate and Staff
of United College,
Christian Friends;—

I suppose a man upon whose shoulders this Hood has been placed, denoting the bestowal of the degree of Doctor of Divinity, will be expected to say something sensible, on an occasion such as this. The most sensible thing I can say, is: Thanks be to God. This is also the theme of our Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Celebration.

When I say this, I have in mind primarily the story of our congregation, which, from very humble beginnings, has grown into a large and influential organization, numbering well nigh two thousand souls. I have also in mind the record of our people generally. When they first came to these parts, about eighty years ago, many of those already in this young country would ask one another rather cynically: Can any good thing come out of Iceland? And the answer of course, was No. But due to the general integrity and hard work of the first and second generation this adverse opinion has been completely reversed, so that now, our people are held in high esteem by their fellow citizens both in Canada and the United States. We, Icelanders, have many faults, no doubt, but we also have some virtues. One of our

virtues, I believe, is our readiness to cooperate with other people, and to be assimilated into the larger life of the community, and at the same time contributing to the community our distinctive traditions, and cultural heritage. That we have been successful in this has been abundantly established through the decades, and is again verified this evening in the splendid tribute which Dr. Graham has just delivered before this audience.

When I say: "Thanks be to God", I am also thinking of our friends. Naturally, I am thinking first and foremost of those friends who are our guests of honor, the Principal, and members of the Senate and Staff of United College. They have come here tonight with a visible token of friendship, and done us all a great honor. We have a special reason to be grateful to them, because, while they are members of another branch of the Christian Church, they have stepped over ecclesiastical boundaries, drawn us within the circle of their friends, recognized our Anniversary, and complimented the pastor of this Church personally. I am very happy to receive this honor at the hands of the Principal of United College, and to be counted among the members of her alumni. Our people have been in close contact with this College through the years. United

College and the University of Manitoba have been to many of our people the Golden Gate to success and prominence in public and private life. It is an honor to belong to that happy family of men and women who have gone out from these institutions.

The same theme echoes in my soul when I think of my own life, and my personal good fortune. I can say with the apostle: "By the grace of God, I am, what I am." Not that I have any illusions about personal grandeur, of greatness of any kind. But it appears by what has transpired here this evening, that God has been able to use me in the service of my fellow men, and that He has blessed me abundantly with a host of friends is quite obvious to me when I look over this vast audience. On this day, which marks a high point in my life, I want to pay a particular tribute to my wife who has always been an intelligent and constructive critic of my efforts, as well as my inspiration and the source of my strength. I am also very happy that all the members of my family are present here; even those of my children, who have moved away to distant places, have by special effort come to honor me by their presence on this great day.

I wish to thank the congregation of the First Lutheran Church, whose love and patience have held up my hands during the many years of my ministry here, a ministry which has

never been easy, and which I am never able to fill to my own satisfaction. It is being said that I have brought honor to you, and I hope this is true. But let me assure you, that this is mutual. It is very doubtful that I would ever have had the degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred on me, had I not been your minister. You have become the channel through which this distinction has come to me; it seems to me that I am basking in your glory, and that I have this evening been carried to undeserved heights by your good name.

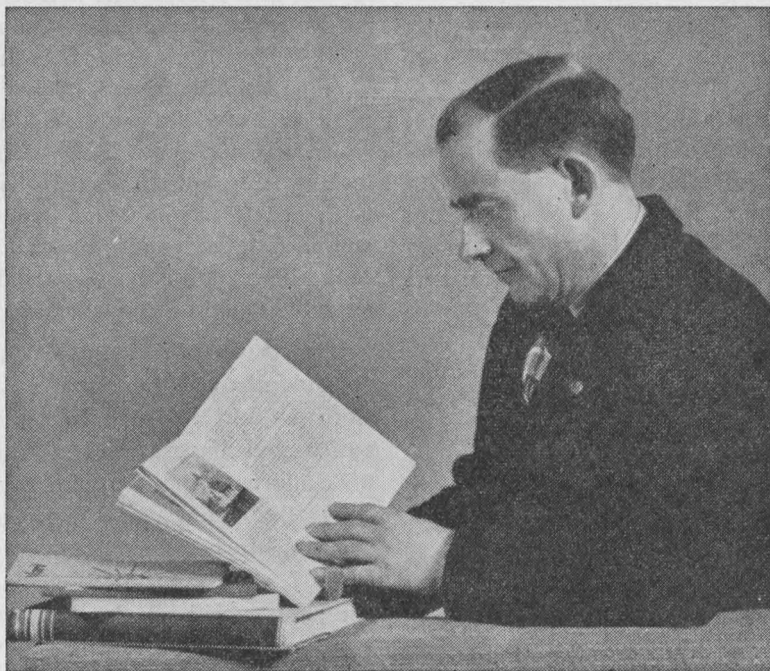
I thank you, President Graham, and you, members of the Senate of United College most heartily for this honor which you have conferred upon me, my congregation here, and my people generally. I hope and pray that the relationship between the people of the great United Church of Canada, and the people of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America, which I have the honor to serve as president, and particularly between United College and the First Lutheran Church, may remain as friendly in the future as it has been in the past. While we are perhaps to some extent divided on the fringe, as regards our background, traditions and theology, I trust we are united at the centre, the centre being our love for, and loyalty to the great Head of the Church Universal, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

REPRESENTS ICELAND

During Coronation Week, the Lions Club met in convention at Edmonton, Alta. One of the high-lights was a flag raising ceremony wherein 43 countries were presented in a colorful pageant.

The representative for Iceland was **Miss Irene Henrickson**, dressed in the traditional costume of the Maid of the Mountain (Fjallkona). Miss Henrickson is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jakob C. Henrickson, Edmonton, Alta.

Dean Einar Sturlaugsson *and his gift to the University Library*

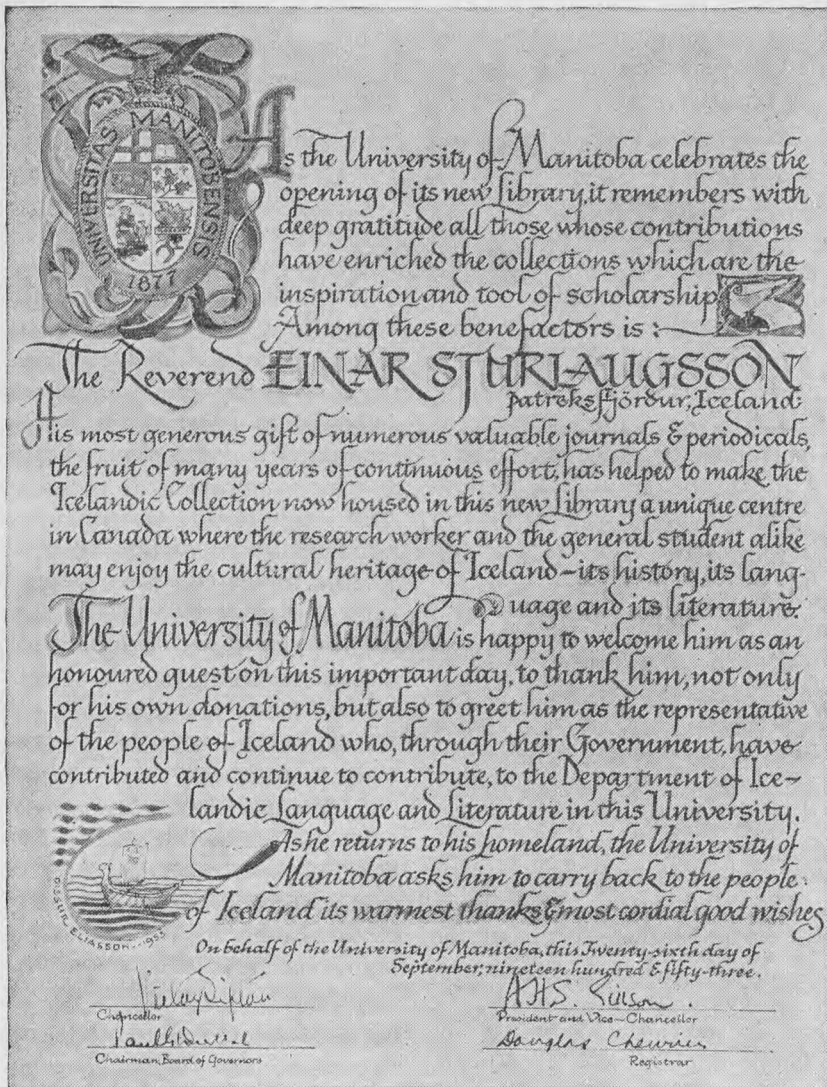


Dean Einar Sturlaugsson

Reverend Einar Sturlaugsson, of Patreksfjörður in Iceland, who made that splendid gift of Icelandic periodicals and magazines to the University of Manitoba, left Canada on September 30, last, and proceeded south to the United States and then on back to Iceland. Rev. Sturlaugsson, or rather Dean Sturlaugsson, for he holds the office of Dean (Prófastur) for the District of Patreksfjörður in the Icelandic State Church, came to Canada as the guest of the University of Manitoba and the Icelandic National League. He stayed here for about two months and decided, very wisely, to spend most of his time visiting the Icelandic settlements. The Dean has a very genuine interest not only in the

Department of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba to which the gift was made, but also in all people of Icelandic descent in America. To him the Department, well equipped with a library of Icelandic books, periodicals and historic relics, with Professor Finnbogi Guðmundsson duly installed and hard at work, is at once a centre for the conservation on this continent of the best in the Icelandic heritage and an outpost for the Icelandic nation at home through which, in the dissemination of knowledge of the Icelandic contribution to Western civilization, that nation can the better reach out into the English-speaking North American world.

It happened, very fortunately, that



This illuminated address was presented to Rev. Einar Sturlaugsson on September 26, 1953 at the dedication of the new library at the University of Manitoba. The address was designed by Gissur Eliasson

this year the University of Manitoba completed the erection of a magnificent modern library building. The opening of the library, fixed for Saturday, September 26, provided the setting for the recognition due Dean Sturlaugsson for his splendid and very valuable gift. He was invited by

the University to be a special guest of honor and during the ceremony was presented by Professor Guðmundsson to the Chancellor and the President of the University. Dr. Gillson pointed out to the large assemblage the value and unique character of the donation after which the Registrar of

the University presented to Rev. Einar Sturlaugsson an illuminated address, a photostatic copy of which appears with this report.

Dean Sturlaugsson's gift is in a sense a gift equally to the Icelandic people of America as to the University of Manitoba. They and their descendants and people who wish to share with them their cherished Icelandic cultural treasure will be the chief benefactors of the gift. The Dean was fortunately able to spare a few days for Winnipeg, and immediate advantage was taken of the opportunity by Icelandic organizations in Winnipeg to give expression in a tangible and permanent way to their appreciation of the priceless gift and their admiration for the donor, who in his sincerity and kindness endeared himself to everyone privileged to meet him or hear him in the pulpit or on the platform.

On Sunday, September 27, the Icelandic National League sponsored a farewell reception for Dean Sturlaugsson for which Consul and Mrs. G. L. Johannson graciously offered their home at 76 Middlegate. Those in attendance included the officers of the Icelandic National League, the members of the Foundation Committee for the Chair in Icelandic, the editors of the Icelandic weeklies and periodicals, representatives of Icelandic organizations in Winnipeg and some of the Icelandic Professors at the University.

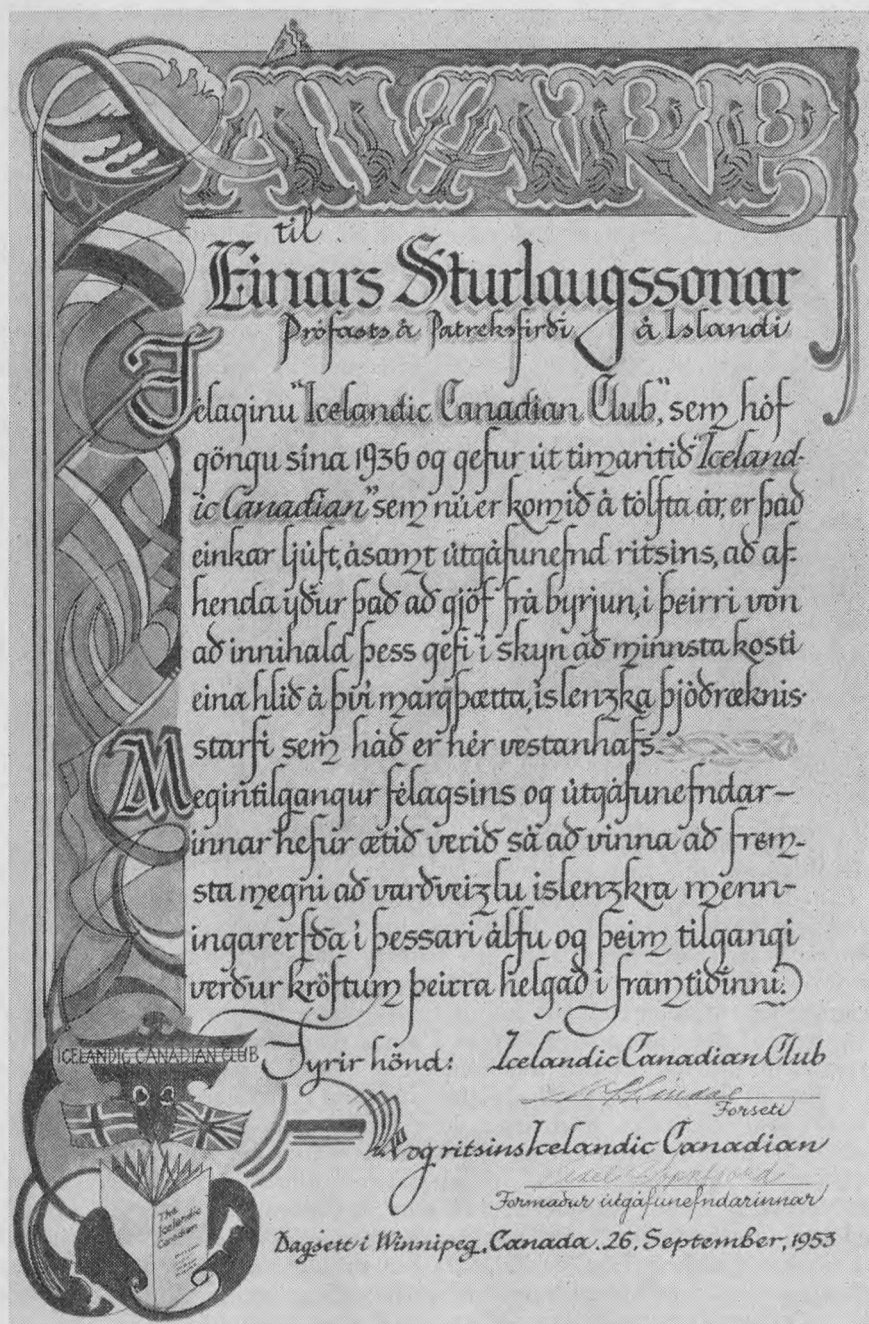
Consul Johannson welcomed the guests and then asked Reverend V. J. Eylands, President of the Icelandic National League, to take charge of the formal part of the proceedings. He thanked Rev. Sturlaugsson for the excellent service he had rendered to the Icelandic people in visiting the many settlements, preaching in their

churches, and delivering addresses at public gatherings. On behalf of the League, Dr. Eylands then presented the guest of honor with a large nylon travelling bag and a complete set of the periodical, "Tímarit", which has been published annually by the League since it came into existence in the year 1919.

Judge W. J. Lindal, President of the Icelandic Canadian Club, was then called upon to extend greetings from the Club at the conclusion of which he delivered to Dean Sturlaugsson an illuminated address, a photostatic copy of which appears with these remarks. Axel Vopnfjord, Chairman of the Editorial Board of the Icelandic Canadian, presented Rev. Sturlaugsson with copies of the magazine, in six volumes, from the beginning of publication twelve years ago.

Mrs. B. S. Benson, Regent of the Jon Sigurdson Chapter I.O.D.E., extended greetings from the Chapter and then presented Rev. Sturlaugsson with the Icelandic Soldiers' Memorial Book of the First World War and also five bound volumes of the Year Book of the Lutheran Women's League of Manitoba, now in its twenty-first year of publication.

On Monday, September 28, Arni G. Eggertson, Esq. Q.C., a member of the Foundation Committee of the Chair in Icelandic, invited the members of the Committee and about a dozen others to a luncheon in the Royal Alexandra Hotel in honor of Dean Einar Sturlaugsson. After luncheon was served, Arni Eggerston called on Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, Chairman of the Foundation Committee, who thanked the guest of honor for the gift to the University library and for his valuable service in arousing



This illuminated address was presented to Rev. Einar Sturlaugsson on September 27, 1953 at the home of Consul and Mrs. G. L. Johannson, Winnipeg. The address was designed by Gissur Eliasson.

enthusiasm for the Icelandic cause in various districts visited by him. Following these remarks, Arni Eggertson, who presided at the gathering, presented Rev. Sturlaugsson, on behalf of the Foundation committee, with fountain pens and stand of marble stone on which was engraved a quotation from one of the sagas: "Þar var yndi hans, sem bækurnar voru" — "where the books were, there was his enjoyment".

To both of these gatherings Einar replied in his customary friendly and appreciative manner.

An event, though not directly connected with the visit of Dean Sturlaugsson and his gift to the University library but so closely associated with both that it may be regarded as the last in a connected series, took place on Saturday, October 3, in the reading

room of the Icelandic Division in the new library. The occasion was the One Hundred Year Anniversary of the birthday of Stephan G. Stephansson. The President of the University invited some of the University professors and about an equal number of Icelanders to luncheon and after luncheon the group adjourned to the Icelandic reading room in the library.

Professor Finnþogi Guðmundsson addressed the group and in the course of his remarks described the desk and other belongings of the poet which his relatives had donated to the library. Dr. Gillson expressed the appreciation of the University for these valuable treasures and called on Judge W. J. Lindal for a few remarks on behalf of the Icelanders present.

W. J. L.

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VALDIMAR J. EYLANDS, dr. theol.:

The Right Rev. Sigurgeir Sigurdsson

Born August 3rd, 1890 -:- Died October 13th, 1953

When in the afternoon of October 13th last, the news came from the Episcopal Residence, Gimli, in Reykjavík, that its occupant, The Most Reverend Sigurgeir Sigurðsson D.D., D.H.L., had slipped quietly away from this earthly life, a great pall of gloom was cast over the entire nation. The people realized that they had lost one of its outstanding citizens, a great leader, and innumerable persons felt they had lost a sincere and personal friend. In spite of the distance, and the more remote contact which the Bishop had with his kinsmen on this side of the Atlantic, the news of his passing also saddened many a heart here. He visited America twice. His first visit was of an official nature, when in 1944 he was appointed by the Government of Iceland as its representative to the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Icelandic National League. At that time he visited many of our communities, not indeed primarily as Bishop, but as an Icelandic Ambassador of Good Will. The Government's choice was a most fortunate one. The trip was a triumph, due to the qualities of the man, his great personal charm, his democratic spirit, and his warm-hearted and sincere friendliness. Individuals and institutions vied with each other to do him honor, and he became the recipient of many tokens of esteem. The University of North Dakota made him a Doctor of Humanities, and Wagner College, New York conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. About



Bishop Sigurgeir Sigurðsson.

that time he was made Honorary Patron of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and he remained such during the remainder of his life.

His elevation to the episcopate, a few years previously, had been a controversial issue, like most such promotions are in his native land. There is no doubt that the record which he made for himself on this official visit to North America, and the reception accorded him here did much to consolidate his position, enhance his reputation, and increase the love and respect which he won and held among his own people. During his term of office he made numerous other trips abroad, particularly to Scandinavia and Great Britain, where he moved

with ease among the mighty of Church and State, and represented his Church and his nation with admirable tact and dignity. Although perhaps to some extent sceptical at first, the nation gradually became aware of the full stature of the man, and realized that he could truly represent them, not only as a Prince of the Church, but as a diplomat as well.

It was easy for Bishop Sigurðsson to represent Iceland; he loved it sincerely and believed that, all things considered, it was one of the best countries in the world. He also loved his people, and endeavored to hold them to the highest. His countrymen on this continent were also very dear to him, and he was intensely interested in maintaining the cultural bond which exists between the sons of Iceland everywhere. For many years as the President of the Icelandic National League in Reykjavík he did much to foster this friendship. Western Icelanders on their visits to their native land were frequent and honored guests at his table; he stretched his hand across the waters, and sent his voice by wire and tape to speak to us words of encouragement and to give us his blessing. While first and foremost an Icelander, he was also an internationalist. All human problems touched him deeply, and he desired to be a friend to all men.

The old saying: "Uneasy rests the head that wears the crown," applies not only to royalty, but to all men of exalted positions of trust and responsibility. It certainly applies to a Bishop of Iceland. His is not an easy position. He stands on a pinnacle around which rage frequent storms, both ecclesiastical and political. His is the job of holding the somewhat loosely knit fabric of the Church together, appease

all factions, promote cooperation among the clergy holding divers theological opinions, act as a liaison officer between Church and State, and secure support for the Church and its institutions from secular officials, who although usually friendly toward the Church, are constantly hard pressed by many claims of temporal characters, which in the opinion of many, are of greater immediate value to the State, than those of the Church. Bishop Sigurðsson's superb skill in handling men, and delicate situations proved to be of great benefit to the Church. Thanks partly to the general improvement in the economic situation in Iceland in recent years, but mainly to his energy and enthusiasm, church buildings and parsonages have sprung up all over the land, and the clergy were granted financial security commensurate with their training and responsibilities. When the Bishop took office there was a general shortage of ministers throughout the land, but now there are more men attending the theological courses at the University than the Church can use in the foreseeable future. This is in no small measure due to the Bishop's influence. He took his duties very seriously. His incessant travels at home and abroad, the strain of office with its numerous duties took a heavy toll of his strength. He actually died on duty, in the service of the institution to which he had dedicated his life. But his fourteen years in office will go down in history as a period of unparalleled achievement in the long annals of the State Church of Iceland.

He enjoyed the esteem and cooperation of most of his clergy. However, there were elements of opposition who objected to his leadership mainly on

theological grounds. There were those who maintained that he was too broad and too liberal. When faced with such charges, whether publicly or privately, his usual rejoinder was that he was as broad as the Bible, and as liberal as Christ. Beyond these he would not, and did not go. He was convinced that this was solid enough a foundation for all Christians on which to stand. He did not consider himself a great theologian, and certainly no dogmatician, but he was a sincere disciple of Jesus Christ. Although no mere humanist, he did not waste his time arguing about the nature of Christ. To him, Christ was above reason, and yet the only reasonable thing for man to do was to follow His steps. All factions of the Church wanted to claim the Bishop as the champion of their views. Actually he was above them all, sitting as it were on a mountain top in the presence of a transfigured Christ, looking with compassion and sometimes with sadness upon the fog and controversial currents of human opinions below, and yet always desiring to draw all men unto the sunlight of His presence. It appears that his theology is summed up in his own words in the Pastoral Letter, addressed to the clergy of Iceland at the time he took office. He

says in part: "When we, my brethren, stand in the exalted presence of our Lord and Master, then we can hardly claim that we understand him fully. The fundamental thing is — that we be drawn to Him, that we desire to be in His presence, and sit at His feet and listen, so that in our souls there may be kindled a warm and sincere desire to follow Him, and become like Him in thought, word and deed, that we may acquire the attitude of a true disciple who would learn of Him the way of life, humility, modesty, and a longing to serve our fellow-men in sympathy and love."

He lived according to this theology. The writer once heard him speak to a large Church convention where a lively debate had been in progress for a long time. He delivered an eloquent impromptu address, the gist of which was an impassioned plea: Come away from your vain disputations. Learn to sit quietly at His feet and listen; then go forth and do His will.

Because he lived his life constantly aware of the presence of Christ from whom he had learned humility, modesty, and a compassion for his fellow-men, he will be long remembered as a good man, an able leader, and a great Bishop.

WINS SCHOLARSHIP

Visions of a possible musical career were opened recently for 25-year-old **William Steinson**, of Saskatoon, when he received an invitation to appear on the radio program "Singing Stars of Tomorrow". Mr. Steinson travelled to Toronto, expenses paid, to compete for a scholarship prize of \$2,000.00.

A teacher at Wilson School in Saskatoon, Mr. Steinson auditioned for the

program on the recommendation of Station C.F.Q.C.'s musical director.

As a child, Mr. Steinson sang for a time as a boy soprano at Saskatoon's Grace United Church. Since his voice changed to a bass-baritone, he has competed several times at Saskatoon musical festivals and, in 1952, won the Justice Brown award for class A singers. William is the son of Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Steinson of Saskatoon.

VALDIMAR J. EYLANDS, dr. theol.

Rev. Egill H. Fáfnis

1898 — 1953

(An Appreciation)



Rev. Egill H. Fáfnis

Which are the forces or influences in human life that constitute a man's character, guide his actions, and make him successful, or otherwise? At least three factors are considered vital: heredity, environment and education. It is difficult to ascertain the proportionate importance of each, but combined, they make most of us what we are.

Egill H. Fáfnis owed his character partly to pre-natal influences. He was fortunate in his heredity, in that his ancestors were able and intelligent persons. His genealogy on both sides may be traced to prominent clergy and community leaders in one of the most intellectually progressive districts of Iceland. His father, Hjálmar, although

"Vom Vater hab' Ich die Statur
Des Lebens ernstes Führen
Von Mutterchen die Frohnatur
Die Lust zu fabuliren."

—Goethe

never particularly successful in his efforts, is said to have been a man of many parts, unusually versatile, exceedingly skillful in his hands, a man of fine physical appearance, endowed with considerable ability as a musician, and a local poet. The father's good traits appeared prominently in the son, who was a man of imposing stature, a good carpenter, possessed a fine singing voice, and was a lover of poetry and good literature. His mother, Jakobína, was also a very intelligent person, and a strong character. If Egill had wanted to follow the outline of Goethe's character analysis in the verse quoted above, he would have been inclined to give his "little mother" (Mutterchen) the greater amount of credit for what he himself became. He loved his mother dearly, and made frequent allusions to her influence upon his early life. From her he received the steady guidance of life, a cheerful disposition, and his poetic talent.

Her moral fortitude, courage, and firm Christian faith were traits in her character which he admired, and which were also transmitted to him. He ascribed the choice of his life work and his happiness largely to her prayers.

The physical environment of his youth, around Mývatn, in the Municipi-

pality of Þingeyjarsýsla, is one of the most delightful in Iceland. The horizon is wide, the mountains, though not majestic, are of rare beauty, both as to shape and colour. Wild life is abundant, and distant waterfalls sing their everlasting song. Nature in those parts seems to be an open poem speaking of the beauty and grandeur of the country, for all who would hear and see. Small wonder that this district has produced outstanding patriots, prominent national leaders, and that the intellectual level of the inhabitants has always been very high. Obviously these surroundings are ideal for an alert youth, and there is no doubt that they had a wholesome influence upon Egill in his formative years. He once said in a letter: "It is doubtful whether any man can fully and finally move away from his native land and his ancestral home". He was one of those who could never completely move away from "home". He loved his native land, and its people, and was anxious that their culture and traditions should receive due recognition in the land of his adoption. This attitude made him a valued member of the Icelandic National League, of which he was vice-president at the time of his death.

To his ancestral influence, and the physical and intellectual environment of his youth was added the impact of his training, first in the local schools at Húsavík, the College at Akureyri, the High School at Arborg, Man., the Jón Bjarnason Academy, the University of Manitoba, and finally his three years of study at the Maywood Theological Seminary in Chicago, Ill. He was a conscientious student, and applied himself earnestly to his courses. At the Seminary he became the recipient of a scholarship for his unusual

progress in the study of the Greek language. His education, provided in three countries, did much to expand his mind, and particularly at the Seminary was he fired with Christian idealism, and given an abiding sense of the values of life.

Another beneficial influence in his life, and certainly not the least of them, was that of his wife, Ellen May Freeman, a splendid woman, whose steady hand and firm character guided him during more than two decades of married life, and inspired him in all his efforts.

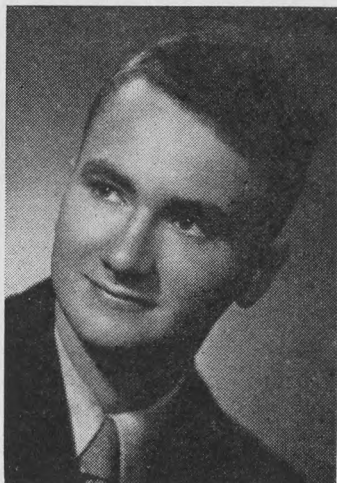
Considering all these influences, we can perhaps say that there was not much original about Egill Fáfnis. How original are any of us? Are we not all the product of these selfsame influences, and if any of them are missing or disproportionate, we are apt to fall by the wayside. At any rate, these were the factors which produced our friend, and made him what he was: an eloquent preacher in two languages, an Icelandic patriot, a prominent leader in church affairs and community life, and above all, a fine Christian gentleman.

His ministerial career was divided between two of our largest communities, Argyle and North Dakota. In the former he spent the first years of his ministry, from 1930-1945; and the remainder, to the time of his untimely passing, in the Mountain, N. D. parish. But although both these parishes are large and time-consuming, his influence and activities exceeded their boundaries. He held at various times all the offices of trust and responsibility that his Synod could bestow upon him, and was recently its president for a five-year period. He was prominent in the Young People's

work of the Synod, and when other pastors were vacationing in some beauty spot during the summer months, he and his wife, were frequently found in charge of the instruction at our Sunrise Lutheran Camp in Husavik. His wide interests and broad sympathies also included the children of the sunset. Many a time did he delight the occupants of the Old Folks Home, "Betel", at Gimli with his splendid vocal offerings. The erection

of the old folks home, "Borg" at Mountain, will stand as a lasting monument to his leadership and love for the older people of the community.

He did not spare himself; he offered all he had in the service of his fellow-man, and it seems to us that his final offering was accepted all too soon. He was only 55 years old. His many friends rise, call him "blessed", and say: Well done, good and faithful, servant.



George Magnus Johnson

In this young man we have an example of the 4th generation of Icelanders in this country making good. His great-grandfather, Jón Magnusson, better known as Jón Póstur¹ came to this country from Hrója in Steingrímsfjörður about 1900. He was followed by his son, Guðbjartur from Akranesi. He and his wife, Guðrún Ólafsdóttir, from Stóra Hvalsá in Hrótafjörður, pioneered in the Mouse River settlement in McHenry County, N. D. To them were born four boys and a girl; Niels, former Attorney General of N.

Dakota, now enjoying a fine reputation and a good practice of law at Bismark, North Dakota; Drs. Ólafur and Kristjan, who founded the very successful Johnson Clinic at Rugby, North Dakota; Einar, former state's attorney of Nelson County, now enjoying a fine practice of law at Lakota, North Dakota, and Mrs. V. J. Eylands, wife of Rev. Eylands, Winnipeg. This is the third generation, all of whom have made excellent records.

Now George Magnus, the son of Niels, is carrying that fine record into the fourth generation. He was born at Rugby, North Dakota, June 16, 1935. He graduated third high in a class of 174 members of the senior class of Bismark High School in 1953. Now he has been awarded a scholarship of \$500.00 by the Consolidated Freightways. This scholarship is awarded to twelve young people from ten states in which the Consolidated Freightways operate. There were 322 scholarship applications, and George was one of the five boys and seven girls selected. This selection was based on his record, not only in high school but on his good character and outside activities as well. George has now entered the University of North Dakota as a freshman.

(1) See Vol. 3, No. 3, Page 45

NEWS FROM THE LEIF EIRIKSSON CLUB

JAKOBINA JOHNSON EVENING

Honoring poetess, Jakobina Johnson, on the occasion of her seventieth birthday, the Leif Eiriksson Club sponsored an enjoyable concert on October 23rd in the lower hall of the First Lutheran Church, Victor St., Winnipeg.

The highlight of the evening was a very sincere and informative lecture by Dr. Richard Beck, paying tribute to Mrs. Johnson both as a writer and as a woman of high purpose and noble mind. As Dr. Beck's address is reproduced elsewhere in this issue, no further comment on it is required here.

Miss Evelyn Thorvaldson, soprano, obliged with musical selections both in Icelandic and English. She performed with such skill that she was repeatedly called back for encores. Her rendition of "Vögguljóð", written by Mrs. Johnson and set to music by S. K. Hall, was particularly enjoyed. Sigrid Bardal accompanied Miss Thorvaldson on the piano.

Dr. Sigurður Júlíus Jóhannesson contributed a poetic tribute to the absent guest of honor, read by Einar P. Jónsson, brother-in-law of the poetess. A selection of Mrs. Johnson's poetry in Icelandic was read by Björn Sigurbjörnsson.

Miss Lilja Eylands presided. Erlingur Eggertson thanked Dr. Beck.

RECEPTION AT THE THORLAKSON RESIDENCE

Dr. and Mrs. P. H. T. Thorlakson were hosts in their beautiful home at 114 Grenfell Blvd., Tuxedo, at a re-

ception held on November 17th. This event was sponsored by the Leif Eiriksson Club, the Icelandic Canadian Club, and the Icelandic National League. The guests were freshmen from the University and United College, students attending the Normal School and Business College, student nurses in their first year, and a few young people who had recently made Winnipeg their home.

Dr. Thorlakson, in welcoming the guests, stated that the purpose of the gathering was to bring together people having a common bond, the Icelandic heritage. He mentioned a similar meeting which was held last year in the home of Judge and Mrs. W. J. Lindal, which resulted in the organization of the Leif Eiriksson Club. He then called upon Judge Lindal to perform the duties of chairman.

Judge Lindal introduced a few representative leaders in the community and student guests from outside of Winnipeg. Having thanked Dr. and Mrs. Thorlakson for their generous hospitality, he called upon representatives of the three sponsoring organizations.

Mrs. E. P. Jónsson spoke on behalf of the Icelandic National League. Judge Lindal, representing the Icelandic Canadian Club, aptly indicated the purpose of the meeting in saying, "It is a newcomer's welcome, newcomers to Winnipeg, and newcomers to institutions of higher learning." In introducing Erlingur Eggertson, he said that Mr. Eggertson was an example of the fine type of young people that comprise the Club. Erlingur outlined the objectives of the Club, and

extended a cordial invitation to newcomers to attend its next meeting.

Professor Finnbogí Guðmundsson described the course in Icelandic at the University. He invited the guests to visit the Icelandic Library at the University, and offered assistance and advice to anyone interested.

An exceptionally fine film on Iceland was shown and thoroughly appreciated by the guests.

Everyone present enjoyed the evening. It is hoped that it will be a forerunner of similar future gatherings.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting for the Club was held on November 10th in the First Lutheran Church with Lilja Eylands presiding. The following officers were elected: Honorary President, Dr. Rúnólfur Marteinsson; President, Erlingur Eggertson; Vice-president, Irene Guttormson; Secretary, Sigríð Bardal; Corresponding Sec'y, Arthur Swainson; Treasurer, Lilja Eylands; Publicity Chairman, Herb Kærsted; Social Chairman, Marion Olson; the Club's

representative on the Editorial Board of the Icelandic Canadian, David Swainson.

A new Constitution, introduced by the Chairman of the Constitution Committee, Arthur Swainson, was discussed and adopted. The Club, with its objectives now defined, has a solid foundation on which to build a better and increasingly efficient organization. The completion of the constitution was due to the efforts of the Chairman and his committee, Allan Beck, Cecil Anderson, and Holman Olson, and they are to be commended for their good work.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8th, in the First Federated Church, Banning and Sargent, at 8.15 p.m. All young people, who are interested in meeting new friends and desiring to participate in the various activities, are cordially invited to send poems, short stories, or items of interest suitable for this column to David Swainson, 471 Home St. Winnipeg, Man.

David A. Swainson

CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNICEF

The Canadian government recently has contributed a half million dollars to the United Nations International Children's Fund, thus raising its total support to UNICEF to almost eight and a half million dollars. On a per capita basis Canada now ranks fifth among countries supporting UNICEF. Ahead are Iceland, New Zealand, Australia, and Brunei, which is located on the Northwest coast of Borneo.

UNICEF also has announced that fifty Austrian microscopes are being purchased with contributions received from that country, a welcome addition to UNICEF-sponsored mother and

child clinics and training schemes in Asia, Latin-America and the Caribbean. The rest of Austria's contribution will buy nine thousand nylon bristle brushes made by Austrian war-blind. The brushes are to be sent to village midwives in Thailand and other countries.



Sheep are shorn for wool in all provinces, but Alberta. Ontario and Quebec usually account for about 70% of the national total. About 30% of the 1953 came from Alberta, 24% from shorn wool produced in Canada in Ontario, and 17% from Quebec.

LITTLE FISHERMAN

by ART REYKDAL



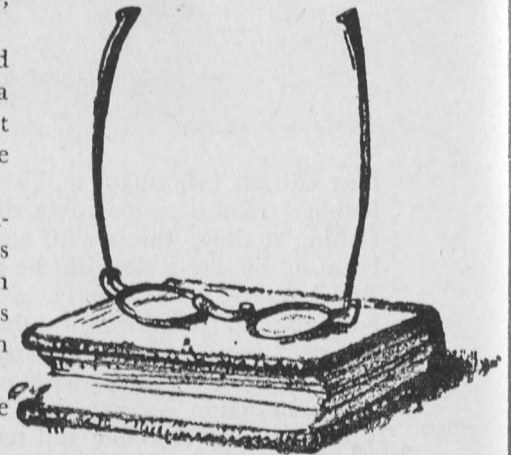
Pint edition fisherman, in his daddy's clothes,
Rubber trousers rolled three times still conceal your toes.
Fishing shallow waters with your tiny, screen-meshed net,
Heading for the scale with the minnows that you get,
And I receive them soberly, in prim and proper style,
For you're so full of business that I must suppress my smile.
But we'll have to pad the total, for it very often seems
That standard mathematics won't fulfill your current dreams.
The transaction is completed. There is nothing gone amiss,
The credit slip is folded and receipted with a kiss,
But each succeeding season sees the oilers' folds grow less,
And I often note the difference with a feeling of distress,
For I know the time is coming when it won't be just a game
And commerce won't allow me to be treating you the same.



Literary Contest

Since the days of Snorri's Heimskringla and the Eddas, Icelanders have taken great pride in their literary heritage. If that heritage is to be preserved on this side of the ocean, it must be done in the English language; and with this aim in view, the Icelandic Canadian Magazine is seeking literary contributions both in poetry and in prose. So come on, folks, show us that our literary tradition didn't die with our ancestors.

- Prizes: short stories, \$25 and \$15; poetry, \$15 and \$10.
- Short stories should not exceed 3,000 words. However, should a longer story of outstanding merit be received, an exception may be made.
- There is no limit to choice of material. Able and experienced judges will be selected, and their decision will be final. The Board reserves the right not to make an award in either contest.
- Members of our editorial staff are not eligible to enter the contest.



Send contributions to Axel Vopnfjord, 1267 Dominion St., Winnipeg, before May 1st 1954

IN THE NEWS

NEW WINNIPEG ALDERMAN



Paul Goodman

The electors of the City of Winnipeg have established a traditionally conservative pattern of voting in the annual civic elections. They seem to have a distrust of radical changes. As a result there is little variation from year to year in the composition of the city council and school board.

The recent civic election was a spectacular departure from this established custom. **Paul Goodman**, making his first bid for political office, topped the poll in Ward 2 with 4014 first-choice votes.

Paul (or "Bill", as he is known to many of his friends) was originally a Selkirk boy. He is the son of the late Páll and Ingiríður Goodman. Displaying at an early age a marked aptitude for athletics, particularly hockey, he played on many of the famed Selkirk

Fishermen teams. The climax of his hockey career was reached in 1937-8, when his fine relief goal-keeping helped the Chicago Black Hawks win the coveted Stanley Cup. During 1939-40 and 1940-41 he was the regular goal keeper for the Hawks, but in 1941 an injury led to his retirement.

Upon the termination of his professional hockey career, he returned to Winnipeg to enter business. However, hockey was in his blood, and during the war years he played for the "Milk-for-Britain-Fund" hockey team which toured the province, playing exhibition games at various centres. Furthermore, he has been sports captain and coach of hockey teams for the Isaac Brock Community Club.

His public activities have not been confined to athletics. He has taken a keen interest and an active part in matters relating to the welfare of the community, particularly those of the Isaac Brock Community Club. He has served for some time on the Board of Trustees of the First Lutheran Church.

Paul's wife, Lena, nee Polson, comes from a well-known pioneering family. They have two daughters, Sue, a teacher at Riverview School, Winnipeg, and Paulina.

★

Donald Kenneth Johnson won the \$200.00 Manitoba Hotelmen's and Brewers Scholarship.

Cyril Johnson won the \$100.00 Winnipeg Public School Scholarship.

They are the sons of Mrs. Fjola and the late Paul Johnson, formerly of Lundar, Manitoba.

HERE SHE IS! THE 1953 BLUE BOMBER QUEEN!



Sylvia Sveinson

Sylvia Sveinson was elected from six final candidates in the Blue Bomber Quarterback Club contest. She was crowned by last years' Queen, Mrs. Ron. Castelane (Pat Hunter), assisted by Karl Slocumb, president of the Winnipeg Rugby Football Club. Sylvia competed in the Miss Grey Cup Contest in Toronto. The Hudson's Bay Company, sponsors of the Fashion Show, presented her with a complete wardrobe for the trip to Toronto.

Sylvia is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sigurdur Sveinson, 351 Riverton Ave. Winnipeg, and the grand-daughter of Mrs. Jóna Sveinson and the late Eyjólfur Sveinson, formerly from Oak View, Man.

★

JON LOVE KARLSSON, Ph.D., M.D.

After receiving his M.D. in the spring of 1952 in San Francisco, **Jon Love Karlsson** moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he was Assistant Professor of Medical Bacteriology at Western

Reserve University. On September 1st of this year he accepted the position of Assistant Medical Director of Cutlers Laboratories, Berkley, California. Cutlers are the largest Drug firm on the West Coast.

★

SCHOLARSHIPS



Frances Augustine Magnusson

Miss Frances Augustine Magnusson, Foam Lake, Sask. while attending school in Bissett, Man., won a University of Manitoba Isbister Scholarship. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gusti Magnusson, formerly of Lundar and Bissett in Manitoba and now farming near Foam Lake, Sask.

★

WINS ANOTHER SCHOLARSHIP

Dorothy Jonasson, a young Winnipeg violinist studying in Toronto, has been awarded a \$200.00 scholarship at the Royal Conservatory's School of Music. Dorothy has been a consistent scholarship winner since she began her musical career. She is the daughter of Mrs. S. O. Jonasson of Winnipeg, and the late Mr. Jonasson. —See Icel. Can., Autumn issues, 1950-51-52.

NEW SUPERINTENDENT



Dolores Randall

Word has been received that Miss Dolores Randall, R.N., has been appointed Superintendent of the Surgical Ward of the Swedish Hospital in Seattle, Washington.

Dolores is the daughter of Mrs. S. K. Wetmore of St. John, New Brunswick, and the grand-daughter of the late Olafur Olafson and Mrs. Arndis Olafson of Seattle, formerly of Piney and Selkirk. She was brought up and educated in Selkirk, received her nurse's training in the St. Boniface Hospital, and did post-graduate work in New York. At the time of her appointment she was surgical nurse at the Swedish Hospital, Seattle.

In the next issue we hope to publish her memoirs of a trip she took around the world in 1949-50.

★

LORNE BENSON
TIES RECORD

Lorne Benson, fullback with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers rugby team, tied an All-Canadian record when he scored six touchdowns in a play-off

game between the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Saskatchewan Roughriders at the new Winnipeg Stadium, October 28th. Lorne was featured in the Icelandic Canadian in the spring issue of this year.

★

TO LEAD SASKATCHEWAN
LIBERALS

Asmundur Loftson

A Saskatchewan farmer, Asmundur Loftson, has been named Liberal House Leader in the legislature of that province, following the resignation last spring of former leader, Walter Tucker. Born in Iceland, Mr. Loftson went to Saskatchewan with his parents when he was two years of age. He has remained there throughout the 64 years that have passed since. At present he makes his home in Yorkton.

He entered politics in 1929, when he represented the constituency of Saltcoats for two terms prior to his defeat by J. L. Phelps, C.C.F., in 1938. He

did not run again until 1952, when he regained his seat against the same opponent.

Mr. Loptson took a homestead in Saskatchewan in 1908, and later entered business. He has been a faithful participator in municipal affairs, served on school boards, and was for a time mayor of the town of Bredenbury.

★

DR. ARLAN BJARNASON



Dr. Arlan Bjarnason

Dr. Arlan Bjarnason was born in Wynyard, Saskatchewan in the year 1921. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Páll Bjarnason who for a number of years lived in Wynyard and in 1933 moved to Vancouver, B. C., where they reside at the present time.

Pall Bjarnason is a well-known poet and prose writer and has translated many gems of poetry in the Icelandic language. His wife Dora is a gifted woman and it was but natural that

their son, should be possessed of the qualities of mind upon which a foundation for a career will be built.

Arlan attended public school in Wynyard, and High School in Vancouver. In World War II he served in the Air Force and held the rank of Pilot Officer, Navigation. He participated in no less than thirty raids on German cities, was lucky enough to come through unscathed although he had many close calls.

After the war Arlan attended the University of British Columbia from which he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts. On graduation he went to Montreal to study medicine at McGill University and obtained his M.D. degree in the spring of this year. Dr. Bjarnason is at present interning in the Vancouver General Hospital.

Dr. Bjarnason married in England and they have two children, a boy and a girl.

★

A WELCOME VISITOR

A large and appreciative audience enjoyed Guðmunda Elíasdóttir's recent recital at the First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg. On the whole it was a delightful evening.

Guðmunda, who has studied voice culture in Denmark and other European countries, came to New York last summer, where she became associated with the Broadway Opera Association. She will sing the leading role in the opera Cavalleria Rusticana, which will be produced in New York shortly.

★

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Christmas present. Price, postpaid, \$2.00 for the finely bound edition, and \$1.00 for the paper bound copy. Order from: Mrs. H. F. Danielson, 869 Garfield St., Winnipeg, Canada.



CANADIAN FISHING INDUSTRY

Fishing is one of Canada's oldest industries. The enthusiastic reports which John Cabot carried back with him to England in 1497 noted the abundance of fish off the Newfoundland coast and attracted much attention in Europe. Soon ships from many European countries sailed for the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in search of the nourishing cod.

The importance of this industry has never declined, and the amount of government legislation enacted through the years to assist and protect the industry would indicate that its importance has never been underestimated.

To-day Canada's fishing exports are greater, in dollar value, than those of any other country in the world; the amount of fish caught to-day by Canadian fishermen is greater than at any time in the history of the industry. The present annual catch exceeds 2,000,000,000 pounds and has a landed value of approximately \$100,000,000 and a market value of almost double that amount.

Approximately two-thirds of Canada's fish are caught off the eastern sea coast and the remainder are caught off the coast of British Columbia and in the inland lakes and rivers.



Pulp and paper was the leading industry in Newfoundland, New

Brunswick and Quebec in 1951; slaughtering and meat packing in Manitoba and Alberta; butter and cheese in Prince Edward Island; primary iron and steel in Nova Scotia; motor vehicles in Ontario; petroleum products in Saskatchewan; and saw-mills in British Columbia.



NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

In 1948 a master plan was worked out to guide the long-range development of Ottawa and the surrounding district and thereby to create a capital city in keeping with Canada's achievements and status as a nation. The plan was tabled in the House of Commons in 1951. Not long ago the Federal District Commission, which was responsible for the carrying out of the plan, has reported that considerable progress has been made. The location and architecture of a number of government buildings and developments either now under construction or projected have been approved as being in accordance with the plan. The Mackenzie King Bridge in Confederation Park is all but completed and a good deal of work has been done on the installation of new railway facilities to enable the removal of certain cross town tracks.

Gatineau Park, a 32,000 acre area in the Gatineau hills just north of Ottawa, has been set aside as a recreational park and game sanctuary, and is administered by the Federal District Commission as part of the Capital Plan. The Park is an area of wooded hills and vales, of lakes and streams, in which trails, picnic spots and camping sites are available for summer enjoyment. In winter it is the ski centre of the Ottawa District.

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